



DATE LABEL

# EIGHT MASTERS OF MODERN PROSE

SELECTED & EDITED

*By*

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483/A  
7.11.49

*Publishers :*

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LAHORE

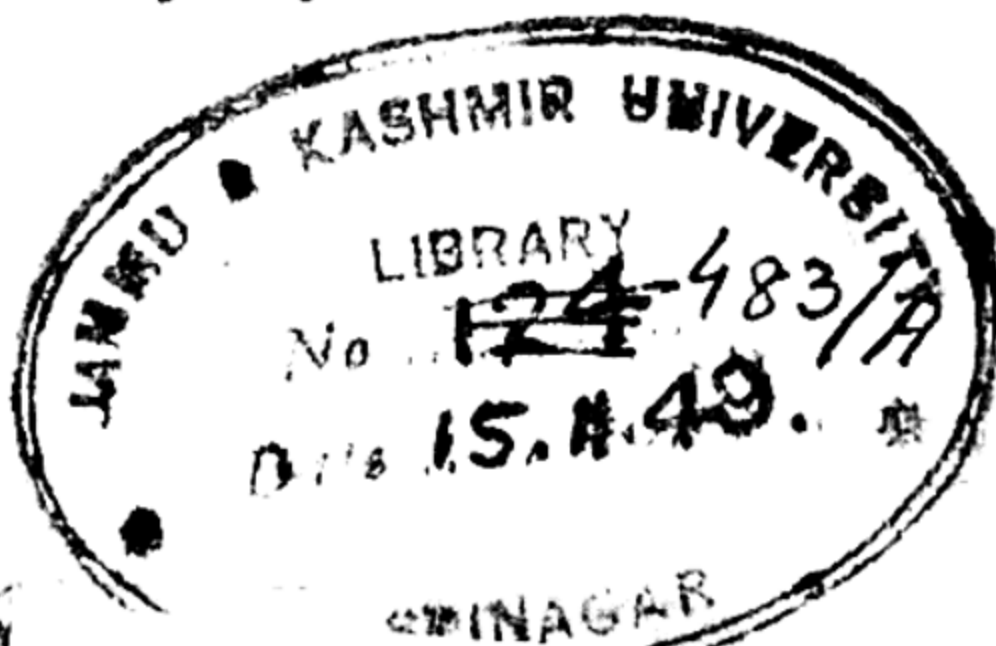
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## PREFACE

The editing of a Text Book of English Prose by one who is neither a Professor of English Literature nor an expert in the Teaching of Languages, requires a word of explanation. The number of Text Books of this variety, being produced at the present time, is legion, yet very few seem to pass the test of suitability for the stage for which they are intended, and Boards of Studies are frequently forced to fall back upon older books which have already been in use for years, and have become jejune and threadbare. The unsuitability of more recent compilations appears to me to lie in the desire on the part of Editors of such books, to strike out a novel line and to lay some claim to originality, in order to escape the charge of dullness. In my opinion such a desire, however laudable in an original work, is entirely out of place in the preparation of a "Selection", which should consist only of extracts from great masters, with whose writings the young of every generation

should be familiar, if they are to claim acquaintance with the English language. If due attention is paid to the interests of the youthful reader who is to study the text, there is no reason why the passages selected should prove dull, although they may be confined to the classics, and may be a hundred years or more in age. The interests of youth being mainly romantic, in this book, the story element will be found to be more prominent than in most text books of this kind. I have not found it necessary to go back any earlier than the Nineteenth century, and I have confined my attention to eight authors only, five selected from the previous century, and three from the present. The space allotted to each author is a good deal more than is permissible in a selection which attempts to be more representative. This will enable my young readers to appreciate more adequately the characteristics of each of the authors represented, but has made it possible for me to make the selections from each author into a more or less complete incident or plot, having an intrinsic interest of its own. It is my hope, however, that specially in the case

of the earlier authors, such as Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, my young readers will be tempted to read the complete works from which these selections are made, for they will find such reading not only pleasurable but also very greatly profitable. It is only through extensive reading of great writers that true familiarity with any language can be attained.

There is only one other merit which I wish to claim for this book and that is that I have kept in view not only the interests of my male readers, but equally so of the girl students, whose number is increasing fast every year. Not only have I included two women writers, one from the Nineteenth and one from the Twentieth century, but the passages selected from all the eight authors should make an equal appeal to both boys and girls.

The view has been expressed in certain quarters that a Text Book in English for the Intermediate stage should be informative and instructive, and not merely entertaining, and for this purpose should contain direct moral advice and guidance and exact scientific information. With such a

view I must respectfully dissent. Moral homilies in my opinion are barren of all effect on the mind of adolescent youth, and he can gain his scientific knowledge by his study of other subjects, or by his private reading. I consider literature, in itself, to be one of the greatest instructive forces which can be brought to bear upon the mind of youth, for literature teaches through life, and the lessons learnt from it, largely unconscious though they may be, are far more formative of character than all the sermons which we can preach. The more enjoyment these selections give to my youthful readers, the more will I feel satisfied, that they have fulfilled their aim.

My grateful thanks are due to Mr. G. D. Khanna, M.A., Lecturer in English at the Central Training College, Lahore, for much helpful aid in preparing this book, and correcting the proofs.

GULMARG

August 19, 1940

G. C. Chatterji.



*Mr. 2nd*  
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## CHAPTER I

# CHARLES DICKENS

1812-1870

[Charles Dickens was born at Landport, near Portsmouth in 1812. He began life in a very humble way. Later he became a Journalist. In 1842 he went to America and again from 1867 to 1868. In 1846 he went to Italy. He was the first Editor of the famous English newspaper, "The Daily News", now called "The Daily News and Chronicle." He founded another paper called "Household Words", later known as "All The Year Round". Many of his works appeared in serial form in these and other journals.

Dickens is the best loved of all the English novelists. Previous to his day the novelists only wrote of the life and adventures of the rich and aristocratic sections of society. Dickens was the first to introduce to the reading public the life of the poor and oppressed. He had a very marked sense of humour, and his appeal is to the heart



rather than the head. He rouses in us pity for the lot of the poor whose sufferings he describes, and resentment against those who ill-treated and exploited them. He had a special love for orphan children as he had been left an orphan himself and had suffered much cruelty in his early years. His *Oliver Twist* (1838) is a powerful indictment of the education of poor children of his day.

*David Copperfield* (1849-50) which is perhaps the best amongst his novels, is largely autobiographical. It is a realistic romance. In this book Dickens has created certain characters which are loved not only by English men and women, but by all who know anything about the English language. They are more real than many creatures of flesh and blood and one laughs at them, grieves for them, and loves them just as one laughs at, grieves for, and loves real living individuals.

The book is not without defects. It ends hazily. Dickens seemed to think that all the miserable and disappointed characters in his book could attain success and happiness by leaving the old country and going away to the colonies. This is a part of his sentimentalism, for life in the new

countries is just as hard as it is in the old. But Dicken's faults do not matter. They are the faults of his time and age. What matters is his greatness, for this is something which neither time nor age can touch. His sense for character, his infinite tenderness, his broad humanity, his indefatigable belief in human nature, his very peculiar sense of humour, these are characteristics which have never been equalled by any man of letters, and Dickens will live, and be loved so long as the English language lives.

We give three extracts from *David Copperfield* which illustrate in a very characteristic manner these qualities of his genius.

Dickens wrote many books. The best known amongst these are, *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Christmas Stories*.

### DAVID GOES TO SCHOOL

We might have gone about half a mile, and my pocket-handkerchief was quite wet' through, when the carrier' stopped short.

Looking out to ascertain for what, I saw, to my amazement, Peggotty<sup>a</sup> burst from a hedge and climb into the cart. She took me in both her arms, and squeezed me to her stays<sup>b</sup> until the pressure on my nose was extremely painful, though I never thought of that till afterwards when I found it very tender. Not a single word did Peggotty speak. Releasing one of her arms, she put it down in her pocket to the elbow, and brought out some paper bags of cakes which she crammed into my pockets, and a purse which she put into my hand, but not one word did she say. After another and a final squeeze with both arms, she got down from the cart and ran away; and my belief is, and has always been, without a solitary button on her gown.<sup>c</sup> I picked up one, of several that were rolling about, and treasured it as a keepsake for a long time.

The carrier looked at me, as if to inquire if she were coming back. I shook my head, and said I thought not. "Then, come up," said the carrier to the lazy horse; who came up accordingly.

Having by this time cried as much as I possibly could, I began to think it was of no use crying

any more, especially as neither Roderick Random, nor that Captain in the Royal British Navy,' had ever cried, that I could remember, in trying situations. The carrier seeing me in this resolution, proposed that my pocket-handkerchief should be spread upon the horse's back to dry. I thanked him, and assented; and particularly small it looked, under those circumstances.

I had now leisure to examine the purse. It was a stiff leather purse, with a snap, and had three bright shillings in it, which Peggotty had evidently polished up with whitening, for my greater delight. But its most precious contents were two half-crowns folded together in a bit of paper, on which was written, in my mother's hand, "For Davy. With my love." I was so overcome by this, that I asked the carrier to be so good as to reach me my pocket-handkerchief again; but he said he thought I had better do without it, and I thought I really had, so I wiped my eyes on my sleeves and stopped myself.

For good, too; though in consequence of my previous emotions, I was still occasionally seized with a stormy sob. After we had jogged on for

some little time, I asked the carrier if he was going all the way?

"All the way where?" inquired the carrier.

"There," I said.

"Where's there?" inquired the carrier.

"Near London," I said.

"Why, that horse," said the carrier, jerking the rein to point him out, "would be deader" than pork afore he got over half the ground."

"Are you only going to Yarmouth, then?" I asked.

"That's about it," said the carrier. "And there I shall take you to the stage-cutch,<sup>10</sup> and the stage-cutch that'll take you to—wherever it is."

As this was a great deal for the carrier (whose name was Mr. Barkis) to say—he being, as I observed in a former chapter, of a phlegmatic temperament, and not at all conversational—I offered him a cake as a mark of attention, which he ate at one gulp, exactly like an elephant, and which made no more impression on his big face than it would have done on an elephant's.

"Did *she* make'em, now?" said Mr. Barkis, always leaning forward, in his slouching way, on



the footboard of the cart with an arm on each knee.

"Peggotty, do you mean, sir?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Barkis. "Her."

"Yes. She makes all our pastry and does all our cooking."

"Do she though?" said Mr. Barkis.

He made up his mouth as if to whistle, but he didn't whistle. He sat looking at the horse's ears, as if he saw something new there; and sat so for a considerable time. By-and-by, he said:

"No sweethearts, I b'lieve?"

"Sweetmeats did you say, Mr. Barkis?" For I thought he wanted something else to eat, and had pointedly alluded to that description of refreshment.

"Hearts," said Mr. Barkis. "Sweethearts; no person walks with her?"

"With Peggotty?"

"Ah!" he said. "Her."

"Oh, no. She never had a sweetheart."

"Didn't she, though?" said Mr. Barkis.

Again he made up his mouth to whistle, and again he didn't whistle, but sat looking at the horse's ears.

"So she makes," said Mr. Barkis, after a long interval of reflection, "all the apple pastries, and does all the cooking, do she?"

I replied that such was the fact.

"Well. I'll tell you what," said Mr. Barkis. "P'raps you might be writin' to her?"

"I shall certainly write to her," I rejoined.

'Ah!' he said, slowly turning his eyes towards me. "Well! If you was writin' to her, p'raps you'd recollect to say that Barkis was willin'; would you?"

"That Barkis was willing," I repeated innocently. "Is that all the message?"

"Ye—es," he said, considering. "Ye—es. Barkis is willin'."

"But you will be at Blunderstone" again tomorrow, Mr. Barkis," I said, faltering a little at the idea of my being far away from it then, "and could give your own message so much better."

As he repudiated this suggestion, however, with a jerk of his head, and once more confirmed his previous request by saying, with profound gravity, "Barkis is willin'. That's the message," I readily undertook its transmission. While I was

waiting for the coach in the hotel at Yarmouth that very afternoon, I procured a sheet of paper and an inkstand and wrote a note to Peggotty, which ran thus: "My dear Peggotty. I have come here safe. Barkis is willing. My love to mama. Yours affectionately. P.S. He says he particularly wants you to know—*Barkis is willing.*"

When I had taken this commission on myself prospectively,<sup>13</sup> Mr. Barkis relapsed into perfect silence; and I, feeling quite worn out by all that had happened lately, lay down on a sack in the cart and fell asleep. I slept soundly until we got to Yarmouth: which was so entirely new and strange to me in the inn-yard to which we drove, that I at once abandoned a latent hope I had had of meeting with some of Mr. Peggotty's<sup>14</sup> family there, perhaps even with little Em'ly<sup>15</sup> herself.

The coach was in the yard, shining very much all over, but without any horses to it as yet; and it looked in that state as if nothing was more likely than its ever going to London. I was thinking this, and wondering what would ultimately become of my box, which Mr. Barkis had put



down on the yard-pavement by the pole" (he having driven up the yard to turn his cart), and also what would ultimately become of me, when a lady looked out of a bow-window where some fowls and joints of meat were hanging up, and said:

"Is that the little gentleman from Blunderstone?"

"Yes, ma'am," I said.

"What name?" inquired the lady.

"Copperfield, ma'am," I said.

"That won't do," returned the lady. "Nobody's dinner is paid for here, in that name."

"Is it Murdstone, ma'am?" I said.

"If you're Master Murdstone," said the lady, "why do you go and give another name, first?"

I explained to the lady how it was, who then rang a bell, and called out, "William ! show the coffee-room !" upon which a waiter came running out of a kitchen on the opposite side of a yard to show it, and seemed a good deal surprised when he was only to show it to me.

It was a large long room with some large maps in it. I doubt if I could have felt much

stranger if the maps had been real foreign countries, had I cast away in the middle of them. I felt it was taking a liberty to sit down, with my cap in my hand, on the corner of the chair nearest the door; and when the waiter laid a cloth on purpose for me, and put a set of casters<sup>28</sup> on it, I think I must have turned red all over with modesty.

He brought me some chops, and vegetables, and took the covers off in such a bouncing<sup>29</sup> manner that I was afraid I must have given him some offence. But he greatly relieved my mind by putting a chair for me at the table, and saying very affably, "Now, six-foot!" come on!"

I thanked him, and took my seat at the board; but found it extremely difficult to handle my knife and fork with anything like dexterity, or to avoid splashing myself with the gravy, while he was standing opposite, staring so hard, and making me blush in the most dreadful manner every time I caught his eye. After watching me into the second chop, he said:

"There's half a pint of ale for you. Will you have it now?"

I thanked him and said, "Yes." Upon which he poured it out of a jug into a large tumbler, and held it up against the light, and made it look beautiful.

"My eye!" he said. "It seems a good deal, don't it?"

"It does seem a good deal," I answered with a smile. For it was quite delightful to me to find him so pleasant. He was a twinkling-eyed, pimple-faced man, with his hair standing upright all over his head; and as he stood with one arm a-kimbo,<sup>2</sup> holding up the glass to the light with the other hand, he looked quite friendly.

"There was a gentleman here yesterday," he said—"a stout gentleman, by the name of Top-sawyer—perhaps you know him?"

"No," I said, "I don't think—"

"In breeches and gaiters, broad-brimmed hat, grey coat, speckled choker,"<sup>3</sup> said the waiter.

"No," I said bashfully, "I haven't the pleasure——"

"He came in here," said the waiter, looking at the light through the tumbler, "ordered a glass

of this ale—*would* order it—I told him not—drank it, and fell dead. It was too old for him. It oughtn't to be drawn; that's the fact."

I was very much shocked to hear of this melancholy accident, and said I thought I had better have some water.

"Why, you see," said the waiter, still looking at the light through the tumbler, with one of his eyes shut up, "our people don't like things being ordered and left. It offends 'em. But I'll drink it, if you like. I'm used to it, and use is everything. I don't think it'll hurt me, if I throw my head back, and take it off quick. Shall I?"

I replied that he would much oblige me by drinking it, if he thought he could do it safely, but by no means otherwise. When he did throw his head back, and take it off quick, I had a horrible fear, I confess, of seeing him meet the fate of the lamented Mr. Topsawyer, and fall lifeless on the carpet. But it didn't hurt him. On the contrary, I thought he seemed the fresher for it.

"What have we got here?" he said, putting a fork into my dish. "Not chops?"

"Chops," I said.

"Lord bless my soul!" he exclaimed, "I didn't know they were chops. Why a chop's the very thing to take off the bad effects of that beer! 'Ain't it lucky?"

So he took a chop by the bone in one hand, and a potato in the other, and ate away with a very good appetite, to my extreme satisfaction. He afterwards took another chop, and another potato; and after that another chop and another potato, when he had done, he brought me a pudding, and having set it before me, seemed to ruminate, and to become absent in his mind for some moments.

"How's the pie?" he said, rousing himself.

"It's pudding," I made answer.

"Pudding!" he exclaimed. "Why, bless me, so it is! What!" looking at it nearer. "You don't mean to say it's a batter-pudding?"

"Yes, it is indeed."

"Why, a batter-pudding," he said, taking up a table-spoon, "is my favourite pudding! 'Ain't that lucky? Come on, little 'un, and let's see who'll get most."

The waiter certainly got most. He entreated



more than once to come in and win, but what with his table-spoon to my tea-spoon, his dispatch to my dispatch, and his appetite to my appetite, I was left far behind at the first mouthful, and had no chance with him. I never saw any one enjoy a pudding so much, I think; and he laughed, when it was all gone, as if his enjoyment of it lasted still.

Finding him so very friendly and companionable, it was then that I asked for the pen and ink and paper, to write to Peggotty. He not only brought it immediately, but was good enough to look over me while I wrote the letter. When I had finished it, he asked me where I was going to school.

I said, "Near London," which was all I knew.

"Oh! my eye!" he said, looking very low-spirited, "I am sorry for that."

"Why?" I asked him.

"Oh, Lord!" he said, shaking his head, "that's the school where they broke the boy's ribs—two ribs—a little boy he was. I should say he was—let me see—how old are you, about?"

I told him between eight and nine.

"That's just his age," he said. "He was eight

years and six months old when they broke his first rib; eight years and eight months old when they broke his second, and did for him."<sup>23</sup>

I could not disguise from myself, or from the waiter, that this was an uncomfortable coincidence, and inquired how it was done. His answer was not cheering to my spirits, for it consisted of two dismal words, "With whopping."<sup>24</sup>

The blowing of the coach-horn in the yard was a seasonable diversion, which made me get up and hesitatingly inquire, in the mingled pride and diffidence of having a purse (which I took out of my pocket), if there were anything to pay.

"There's a sheet of letter-paper," he returned. "Did you ever buy a sheet of letter-paper?"

I could not remember that I ever had.

"It's dear," he said, "on account of the duty. Threepence. That's the way we're taxed in this country. There's nothing else, except the waiter. Never mind the ink. I lose by that."

"What should you—what should I—how much ought I to—what would it be right to pay the waiter, if you please?" I stammered, blushing.

"If I hadn't a family, and that family hadn't the cowpock," said the waiter, "I wouldn't take a sixpence. If I didn't support an aged pairint,<sup>m</sup> and a lovely sister,"—here the waiter was greatly agitated—"I wouldn't take a farthing. If I had a good place, and was treated well here, I should beg acceptance of a trifle, instead of taking of it. But I live on broken wittles."<sup>m</sup>—and I sleep on the coals"—here the waiter burst into tears.

I was very much concerned for his misfortunes, and felt that any recognition short of ninepence would be mere brutality and hardness of heart. Therefore I gave him one of my three bright shillings, which he received with much humility and veneration, and spun up with his thumb, directly afterwards, to try the goodness of.

### BARKIS'S WOOING

Mr. Barkis came into the house for Peggotty's boxes. I had never known him to pass the garden-gate before, but on this occasion he came into the house. And he gave me a look as he shouldered the largest box and went out, which I thought had meaning in it, if meaning could ever be said to find its way into Mr. Barkis's visage.



Peggotty was naturally in low spirits at leaving what had been her home so many years, and where the two strong attachments of her life—for my mother and myself—had been formed. She had been walking in the churchyard, too, very early; and she got into the cart, and sat in it with her handkerchief at her eyes.

So long as she remained in this condition, Mr. Barkis gave no sign of life whatever. He sat in his usual place and attitude, like a great stuffed figure. But when she began to look about her, and to speak to me, he nodded his head and grinned several times. I have not the least notion at whom, or what he meant by it.

“It’s a beautiful day, Mr. Barkis!” I said, as an act of politeness.

“It ain’t bad,” said Mr. Barkis, who generally qualified his speech, and rarely committed himself.

“Peggotty is quite comfortable now, Mr. Barkis,” I remarked, for his satisfaction.

“Is she, though?” said Mr. Barkis.

After reflecting about it, with a sagacious air, Mr. Barkis eyed her, and said:

"*Are* you pretty comfortable?"

Peggotty laughed, and answered in the affirmative.

"But really and truly, you know. Are you?" growled, Mr. Barkis, sliding nearer to her on the seat, and nudging her with his elbow. "Are you? Really and truly, pretty comfortable? Are you? Eh?" At each of these inquiries Mr. Barkis shuffled nearer to her, and gave her another nudge; so that at last we were all crowded together in the left-hand corner of the cart, and I was so squeezed that I could hardly bear it.

Peggotty calling his attention to my sufferings, Mr. Barkis gave me a little more room at once, and got away by degrees. But I could not help observing that he seemed to think he had hit upon a wonderful expedient for expressing himself in a neat, agreeable, and pointed manner, without the inconvenience of inventing conversation. He manifestly chuckled over it for some time. By-and-by he turned to Peggotty again, and repeating, "Are you pretty comfortable, though?" bore down upon us as before, until the breath was nearly wedged out of my body. By-

and-by he made another descent upon us with the same inquiry, and the same result. At length, I got up whenever I saw him coming, and standing on the foot-board, pretended to look at the prospect; after which I did very well.

He was so polite as to stop at a public-house, expressly on our account, and entertain us with broiled mutton and beer. Even when Peggotty was in the act of drinking, he was seized with one of those approaches, and almost choked her. But as we drew nearer to the end of our journey, he had more to do and less time for gallantry; and when we got on Yarmouth pavement, we were all too much shaken and jolted, I apprehend, to have any leisure for anything else.

Mr. Peggotty and Ham' waited for us at the old place. They received me and Peggotty in an affectionate manner, and shook hands with Mr. Barkis, who, with his hat on the very back of his head, and a shamefaced leer upon his countenance, and pervading his very legs, presented but a vacant appearance, I thought. They each took one of Peggotty's trunks, and we were going away, when Mr. Barkis solemnly made a sign to me with his forefinger to come under an archway.

"I say," growled Mr. Barkis, "it was all right."

I looked up into his face, and answered, with an attempt to be very profound. "Oh!"

"It didn't come to an end, there," said Mr. Barkis, nodding confidentially. "It was all right."

Again I answered, "Oh!"

"You know who was willin'," said my friend. "It was Barkis, and Barkis only."

I nodded assent.

"It's all right," said Mr. Barkis, shaking hands; "I'm a friend of your's." You made it all right, first. It's all right."

In his attempts to be particularly lucid, Mr. Barkis was so extremely mysterious that I might have stood looking in his face for an hour, and most assuredly should have got as much information out of it as out of the face of a clock that had stopped, but for Peggotty's calling me away. As we were going along, she asked me what he had said; and I told her he had said it was all right.

"Like his impudence," said Peggotty, "but I don't mind that! Davy dear, what should you think if I was to think of being married?"

"Why—I suppose you would like me as much then, Peggotty, as you do now?" I returned, after a little consideration.

Greatly to the astonishment of the passengers in the street, as well as of her relations going on before, the good soul was obliged to stop and embrace me on the spot, with many protestations of her unalterable love.

"Tell me what should you say, darling?" she asked again, when this was over, and we were walking on.

"If you were thinking of being married—to Mr. Barkis, Peggotty?"

"Yes," said Peggotty.

"I should think it would be a very good thing. For then you know, Peggotty, you would always have the horse and cart to bring you over to see me, and could come for nothing, and be sure of coming."

"The sense of the dear!" cried Peggotty. "What I have been thinking of, this month back! Yes, my precious; and I think I should be more independent altogether, you see; let alone my working with a better heart in my own house,



than I could in anybody else's now. I don't know what I might be fit for, now, as a servant to a stranger. And I shall be always near my pretty's resting-place," said Peggotty, musing, "and be able to see it when I like; and when I lie down to rest, I may be laid not far off from my darling girl!"

We neither of us said anything for a little while.

"But I wouldn't so much as give it another thought," said Peggotty, cheerily, "if my Davy was anyways against it—not if I had been asked in church thirty times three times over,\* and was wearing out the ring in my pocket."

"Look at me, Peggotty," I replied; "and see if I am not really glad, and don't truly wish it!" As indeed I did, with all my heart.

"Well, my life," said Peggotty, giving me a squeeze, "I have thought of it night and day, every way I can, and I hope the right way; but I'll think of it again, and speak to my brother about it, and in the meantime we'll keep it to ourselves, Davy, you and me. Barkis is a good plain creatur'," said Peggotty, "and if I tried to do my

duty by him, I think it would be my fault if I wasn't—if I wasn't pretty comfortable," said Peggotty, laughing heartily.

This quotation from Mr. Barkis was so appropriate, and tickled us both so much, that we laughed again and again, and were quite in a pleasant humour when we came within view of Mr. Peggotty's cottage.

It looked just the same, except that it may, perhaps, have shrunk a little in my eyes; and Mrs. Gummidge<sup>4</sup> was waiting at the door as if she had stood there ever since. All within was the same, down to the seaweed in the blue mug in my bedroom. I went into the outhouse to look about me; and the very same lobsters, crabs, and crawfish possessed by the same desire to pinch the world in general, appeared to be in the same state of conglomeration<sup>5</sup> in the same old corner.

But there was no little Em'ly to be seen, so I asked Mr. Peggotty where she was.

"She's at school, sir," said Mr. Peggotty, wiping the heat consequent on the portorage<sup>6</sup> of Peggotty's box from his forehead; "she'll be home," looking at the Dutch clock, "in from

twenty minutes to half-an-hour's time. We all of us feel the loss of her, bless ye!"

Mrs. Gummidge moaned.

"Cheer up, Mawther!" cried Mr. Peggotty.

"I feel it more than anybody else," said Mrs. Gummidge: "I'm a lone lorn creetur" and she used to be a'most the only thing that didn't go contrary with me."

Mrs. Gummidge, whimpering and shaking her head, applied herself to blowing the fire. Mr. Peggotty, looking round upon us while she was so engaged, said in a low voice, which he shaded with his hand: "The old 'un!" From this I rightly conjectured that no improvement had taken place since my last visit in the state of Mrs. Gummidge's spirits.

Now, the whole place was, or it should have been, quite as delightful a place as ever; and yet it did not impress me in the same way. I felt rather disappointed with it. Perhaps it was because little Em'ly was not at home. I knew the way by which she would come, and presently found myself strolling along the path to meet her.



A figure appeared in the distance before long, and I soon knew it to be Em'ly, who was a little creature still in stature, though she was grown. But when she drew nearer, and I saw her blue eyes looking bluer, and her dimpled face looking brighter, and her whole self prettier and gayer, a curious feeling came over me that made me pretend not to know her and pass by as if I were looking at something a long way off. I have done such a thing since in later life, or I am mistaken.

Little Em'ly didn't care a bit. She saw me well enough; but instead of turning round and calling after me, ran away laughing. This obliged me to run after her, and she ran so fast that we were very near the cottage before I caught her.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said little Em'ly.

"Why, you knew who it was, Em'ly," said I.

"And didn't *you* know who it was?" said Em'ly. I was going to kiss her, but she covered her cherry lips with her hands, and said she wasn't a baby now, and ran away laughing more than ever, into the house.

She seemed to delight in teasing me, which

was a change in her I wondered at very much. The tea-table was ready, and our little locker was put out in its old place, but instead of coming to sit by me, she went and bestowed her company upon that grumbling Mrs. Gummidge: and on Mr. Peggotty's inquiring why, rumped her hair<sup>r</sup> all over her face to hide it, and would do nothing but laugh.

"A little puss it is!" said Mr. Peggotty, patting her with his great hand.

"So sh' is! so sh' is!" cried Ham. "Mas'r Davy bor',<sup>o</sup> so sh' is!" and he sat and chuckled at her for some time, in a state of mingled admiration and delight, that made his face a burning red.

Little Em'ly was spoiled by them all, in fact; and by no one more than Mr. Peggotty himself, whom she could have coaxed into anything<sup>n</sup> by only going and laying her cheek against his rough whisker. That was my opinion, at least, when I saw her do it; and I held Mr. Peggotty to be thoroughly in the right. But she was so affectionate and sweet-natured, and had such a pleasant manner of being both sly and shy at once, that she captivated me more than ever.

She was tender-hearted, too; for when, as we sat round the fire after tea, an allusion was made by Mr. Peggotty over his pipe to the loss I had sustained,<sup>12</sup> the tears stood in her eyes, and she looked at me so kindly across the table, that I felt quite thankful to her.

"Ah!" said Mr. Peggotty, taking up her curls, and running them over his hand like water, "here's another orphan, you see, sir. And here," said Mr. Peggotty, giving Ham a back-handed knock in the chest, "is another of 'm, though he don't look much like it."

"If I had you for my guardian, Mr. Peggotty," said I, shaking my head, "I don't think I should *feel* much like it."

"Well said, Mas'r Davy, bor'!" cried Ham in an ecstasy. "Hoorah! Well said! Nor more you wouldn't! Hor! Hor!"—Here he returned Mr. Peggotty's back-hander, and little Em'ly got up and kissed Mr. Peggotty.

"And how's your friend, sir?" said Mr. Peggotty, to me.

"Steerforth?"<sup>13</sup> said I.

"That's the name!" cried Mr. Peggotty, turning to Ham. "I knowed" it was something in our way."

"You said it was Rudderford," observed Ham, laughing.

"Well!" retorted Mr. Peggotty. "And ye steer with a rudder, don't ye? It ain't fur off." How is he, sir?"

"He was very well indeed when I came away, Mr. Peggotty."

"There's a friend!" said Mr. Peggotty, stretching out his pipe. "There's a friend, if you talk of friends! Why, Lord love my heart alive, if it ain't a treat to look at him!"

"He is very handsome, is he not?" said I, my heart warming with this praise.

"Handsome!" cried Mr. Peggotty. "He stands up to you like—like a—why I don't know what he *don't* stand up to you like. He's so bold!"

"Yes! That's just his character," said I. "He's as brave as a lion, and you can't think how frank he is, Mr. Peggotty."

"And I do suppose, now," said Mr. Peggotty, looking at me through the smoke of his pipe "that in the way of booklarning he'd take the wind out of almost anything."

"Yes," said I, delighted; "he knows everything. He is astonishingly clever."

"There's a friend!" murmured Mr. Peggotty, with a grave toss of his head.

"Nothing seems to cost him any trouble," said I. "He knows a task if he only looks at it. He is the best cricketer you ever saw. He will give you almost as many men<sup>16</sup> as you like at draughts, and beat you easily."

Mr. Peggotty gave his head another toss, as much as to say: "Of course he will."

"He is such a speaker," I pursued, "that he can win anybody over; and I don't know what you'd say if you were to hear him sing, Mr. Peggotty."

Mr. Peggotty gave his head another toss, as much as to say: "I have no doubt of it."

"Then, he's such a generous, fine, noble fellow," said I, quite carried away by my favourite theme, "that it's hardly possible to give him as much praise as he deserves. I am sure I can never feel thankful enough for the generosity with which he has protected me, so much younger and lower in the school than himself."

I was running on, very fast indeed, when my eyes rested on little Em'ly's face, which was bent forward over the table, listening with the deepest attention, her breath held, her blue eyes sparkling like jewels, and the colour mantling in her cheeks.<sup>17</sup> She looked so extraordinarily earnest and pretty, that I stopped in a sort of wonder; and they all observed her at the same time, for as I stopped, they laughed and looked at her.

"Em'ly is like me," said Peggotty, "and would like to see him".

Em'ly was confused by our all observing her, and hung down her head, and her face was covered with blushes. Glancing up presently through her stray curls, and seeing that we were all looking at her still (I am sure I, for one, could have looked at her for hours), she ran away, and kept away until it was nearly bedtime.

I lay down in the old little bed in the stern of the boat, and the wind came moaning on across the flat as it had done before. But I could not help fancying, now, that it moaned of those who were gone; and instead of thinking that the sea might rise in the night and float the boat away,



I thought of the sea that had risen, since I last heard those sounds, and drowned my happy home. I recollect, as the wind and water began to sound fainter in my ears, putting a short clause into my prayers, petitioning that I might grow up to marry little Em'ly, and so dropping lovingly asleep.

The days passed pretty much as they had passed before, except—it was a great exception—the little Em'ly and I seldom wandered on the beach now. She had tasks to learn, and needlework to do; and was absent during the greater part of each day. But I felt that we should not have had these old wanderings, even if it had been otherwise. Wild and full of childish whims as Em'ly was, she was more of a little woman than I had supposed. She seemed to have got a great distance away from me, in little more than a year. She liked me, but she laughed at me, and tormented me; and when I went to meet her, stole home another way, and was laughing at the door when I came back, disappointed. The best times were when she sat quietly at work in the doorway, and I sat on the wooden steps at her feet, reading to her. It seems to me at this hour, that I have

never seen such sunlight as on those bright April afternoons; that I have never seen such a sunny little figure as I used to see, sitting in the doorway of the old boat; that I have never beheld such sky, such water, such glorified ships sailing away into golden air.

On the very first evening after our arrival, Mr. Barkis appeared in an exceedingly vacant and awkward condition, and with a bundle of oranges tied up in a handkerchief. As he made no allusion of any kind to this property, he was supposed to have left it behind him by accident when he went away; until Ham, running after him to restore it, came back with the information that it was intended for Peggotty. After that occasion he appeared every evening at exactly the same hour, and always with a little bundle, to which he never alluded, and which he regularly put behind the door, and left there. These offerings of affection were of a most various and eccentric description. Among them I remember a double set of pigs' trotters,<sup>18</sup> a huge pin-cushion, half a bushel or so of apples, a pair of jet earrings, some Spanish onions, a box of dominoes, a canary bird and cage, and a leg of pickled pork.

Mr. Barkis's wooing, as I remember it, was altogether of a peculiar kind. He very seldom said anything; but would sit by the fire in much the same attitude as he sat in his cart, and stare heavily at Peggotty, who was opposite. One night, being, as I suppose, inspired by love, he made a dart at the bit of waxcandle she kept for her thread and put it in his waistcoat pocket and carried it off. After that, his great delight was to produce it when it was wanted, sticking to the lining of his pocket, in a partially melted state, and pocket it again when it was done with. He seemed to enjoy himself very much, and not to feel at all called upon to talk. Even when he took Peggotty out for a walk on the flats" he had no uneasiness on that head, I believe; contenting himself with now and then asking her if she was pretty comfortable; and I remember that sometimes, after he was gone, Peggotty would throw her apron over her face, and laugh for half-an-hour. Indeed, we were all more or less amused, except that misreable Mrs. Gummidge, whose courtship would appear to have been of an exactly parallel nature, she was so continually reminded by these

transactions of the old one.

At length, when the term of my visit was nearly expired, it was given out that Peggotty and Mr. Barkis were going to make a day's holiday together, and that little Em'ly and I were to accompany them. I had but a broken sleep the night before, in anticipation of the pleasure of a whole day with Em'ly. We were all astir betimes in the morning; and while we were yet at breakfast, Mr. Barkis appeared in the distance, driving a chaise cart towards the object of his affections.

Peggotty was dressed as usual, in her neat and quiet mourning; but Mr. Barkis bloomed in a new blue coat, of which the tailor had given him such good measure, that the cuffs would have rendered gloves unnecessary in the coldest weather, while the collar was so high that it pushed his hair up on end on the top of his head. His bright buttons, too, were of the largest size. Rendered complete by drab<sup>ed</sup> pantaloons and a buff<sup>ed</sup> waistcoat, I thought Mr. Barkis a phenomenon of respectability.

When we were all in a bustle outside the door, I found that Mr. Peggotty was prepared

with an old shoe,<sup>22</sup> which was to be thrown after us for luck, and which he offered to Mrs. Gummidge for that purpose.

"No. It had better be done by somebody else, Dan'l," said Mrs. Gummidge. "I'm a lone lorn creetur' myself, and everythink that reminds me of creeturs that ain't lone and lorn, goes contrairy<sup>23</sup> with me."

"Come, old gal!" cried Mr. Peggotty. "Take and heave it."

"No, Dan'l," returned Mrs. Gummidge, whimpering and shaking her head. "If I felt less, I could do more. You don't feel like me, Dan'l; thinks don't go contrairy with you, nor you with them; you had better do it yourself."

But here Peggotty, who had been going about from one to another in a hurried way, kissing every body, called out from the cart, in which we all were by this time (Em'ly and I on two little chairs, side by side), that Mrs. Gummidge must do it. So Mrs. Gummidge did it; and, I am sorry to relate, cast a damp upon the festive character of our departure, by immediately bursting into tears, and sinking subdued into the arms of Ham,



with the declaration that she knowed she was a burden, and had better be carried to the House at once. Which I really thought was a sensible idea, that Ham might have acted on.

Away we went, however, on our holiday excursion; and the first thing we did was to stop at a church, where Mr. Barkis tied the horse to some rails, and went in with Peggotty, leaving little Em'ly and me alone in the chaise. I took that occasion to put my arm round Em'ly's waist, and propose that as I was going away so very soon now, we should determine to be very affectionate to one another, and very happy, all day. Little Em'ly consenting, and allowing me to kiss her, I became desparate; informing her, I recollect, that I never could love another, and that I was prepared to shed the blood of anybody who should aspire to her affections.

How merry little Em'ly made herself about it! With what a demure<sup>n</sup> assumption of being immensely older and wiser than I, the fairy little woman said I was "a silly boy;" and then laughed so charmingly that I forgot the pain of being



called by that disparaging name, in the pleasure of looking at her.

Mr. Barkis and Peggotty were a good while in the church, but came out at last, and then we drove away into the country. As we were going along, Mr. Barkis turned to me, and said, with a wink,—by-the-bye, I should hardly have thought, before, that he *could* wink :

“What name was it as I wrote up in the cart ?”

“Clara Peggotty,” I answered.

“What name would it be as I should write up now, if there was a tilt<sup>25</sup> here ?”

“Clara Peggotty again ?” I suggested.

“Clara Peggotty Barkis !” he returned, and burst into a roar of laughter that shook the chaise.

In a word, they were married, and had gone into the church for no other purpose. Peggotty was resolved that it should be quietly done; and the clerk had given her away, and there had been no witnesses of the ceremony. She was a little confused when Mr. Barkis made this abrupt announcement of their union, and could not hug me enough in token of her unimpaired affection; but

she soon became herself again, and said she was very glad it was over.

We drove to a little inn in a by-road, where we were expected, and where we had a very comfortable dinner, and passed the day with great satisfaction. If Peggotty had been married every day for the last ten years, she could hardly have been more at her ease about it; it made no sort of difference in her : she was just the same as ever, and went out for a stroll with little Em'ly and me before tea, while Mr. Barkis philosophically smoked his pipe, and enjoyed himself, I suppose with the contemplation of his happiness. If so, it sharpened his appetite; for I distinctly called to mind that, although he had eaten a good deal of pork and greens at dinner, and had finished off with a fowl or two, he was obliged to have cold boiled bacon for tea, and disposed of a large quantity without any emotion.

I have often thought, since, what an odd, innocent, out-of-the-way kind of wedding it must have been ! We got into the chaise again soon after dark, and drove cosily back, looking up at the stars, and talking about them. I was their

chief exponent, and opened Mr. Barkis's mind to an amazing extent. I told him all I knew, but he would have believed anything I might have taken it into my head to impart to him; for he had a profound veneration for my abilities, and informed his wife in my hearing, on that very occasion, that I was "a young Roehus"—by which I think he meant prodigy.

When we had exhausted the subject of the stars, or rather when I had exhausted the mental faculties of Mr. Barkis, little Em'ly and I made a cloak of an old wrapper, and sat under it for the rest of the journey. Ah, how I loved her! What happiness (I thought) if we were married, and were going away anywhere to live among the trees and in the fields, never growing older, never growing wiser, children ever, rambling hand in hand through sunshine and among flowery meadows, laying down our heads on moss at night, in a sweet sleep of purity and peace, and buried by the birds when we were dead! Some such picture, with no real world in it, bright with the light of our innocence, and vague as the stars afar off, was in my mind all the way. I am glad to

think there were two such guileless hearts at Peggotty's marriage as little Em'ly's and mine. I am glad to think the Loves and Graces<sup>m</sup> took such airy forms in its homely procession.

Well, we came to the old boat again in good time at night; and there Mr. and Mrs. Barkis bade us good-bye, and drove away snugly to their own home. I felt then, for the first time, that I had lost Peggotty. I should have gone to bed with a sore heart indeed under any other roof but that which sheltered little Em'ly's head.

#### MR. MICAWBER

The counting-house clock was at half-past twelve, and there was general preparation for going to dinner, when Mr. Quinion tapped at the counting house window, and beckoned to me to go in. I went in, and found there a 'stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown 'surtout' and black 'tights' and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one and very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face, which he turned full upon me. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirt-collar on. He carried a jaunty sort of stick,

with a large pair of rusty tassels to it ; and a quizzing-glass<sup>a</sup> hung outside his coat,—for ornament, I afterwards found as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.

“This,” said Mr. Quinion,<sup>c</sup> in allusion to myself, “is he.”

“This,” said the stranger with a certain condescending roll in his voice,<sup>d</sup> and a certain indescribable air of doing something genteel, which impressed me very much, “is Master Copperfield. I hope I see you well, sir ?”

I said I was very well, and hoped he was. I was sufficiently ill at ease, Heaven knows ; but it was not in my nature to complain much at that time of my life, so I said I was very well, and hoped he was.

“I am,” said the stranger, “thank Heaven, quite well. I have received a letter from Mr. Murdstone, in which he mentions that he would desire me to receive into an apartment in the rear of my house, which is at present unoccupied—and is, in short, to be let as a—in short,” said the



stranger, with a smile, and in a burst of confidence "as a bedroom—the young beginner whom I have now the pleasure to—" and the stranger waved his hand, and settled his chin in his shirt-collar.

"This is Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion to me.

"Ahem !" said the stranger, "that is my name."

"Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion, "is known to Mr. Murdstone. He takes orders for us on commission, when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone, on the subject of your lodgings, and he will receive you as a lodger."

"My address," said Mr. Micawber, "is Windsor Terrace, City Road. I—in short," said Mr. Micawber, with the same genteel air, and in another burst of confidence—"I live there".

I made him a bow.

"Under the impression," said Mr. Micawber, "that your peregrinations' in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the arcana' of the



Modern Babylon" in the direction of the City Road—in short," said Mr. Micawber, in another burst of confidence, "that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening, and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way."

I thanked him with all my heart, for it was friendly in him to offer to take that trouble.

"At what hour," said Mr. Micawber, "shall I——"

"At about eight," said Mr. Quinion.

"At about eight," said Mr. Micawber. "I beg to wish you good day, Mr. Quinion. I will intrude no longer."

So he put on his hat, and went out with his cane under his arm: very upright, and humming a tune when he was clear of the counting-house."

Mr. Quinion then formally engaged me to be as useful as I could in the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first and seven afterwards. He paid me a week down (from his own pocket, I believe), and I gave Mealy sixpence out

of it to get my trunk carried to Windsor Terrace that night : it being too heavy for my strength, small as it was. I paid sixpence more for my dinner, which was a meat pie and a turn at a neighbouring pump;" and passed the hour which was allowed for that meal, in walking about the streets.

At the appointed time in the evening, Mr. Micawber reappeared. I washed my hands and face, to do the greater honour to his gentility, and we walked to our house, as I suppose I must now call it, together; Mr. Micawber impressing the names of streets, and the shapes of corner houses upon me, as we went along, that I might find my way back, easily, in the morning.

Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace (which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could), he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour (the first floor was altogether unfurnished, and the blinds were kept down to delude the neighbours), with a baby at her breast. This baby was one of twins; and I may remark here that I hardly ever, in all my experience of the

family, saw both the twins detached from Mrs. Micawber at the same time. One of them was always taking refreshment.

There were two other children; Master Micawber, aged about four, and Miss Micawber, aged about three. These, and a dark-complexioned young woman, with a habit of snorting, who was servant to the family, and informed me, before half-an-hour had expired, that she was "a Orfling,"<sup>12</sup> and came from St. Luke's work-house,<sup>13</sup> in the neighbourhood, completed the establishment. My room was at the top of the house, at the back : a close chamber; stencilled<sup>14</sup> all over with an ornament which my young imagination represented as a blue muffin; and very scantily furnished.

"I never thought," said Mrs. Micawber, when she came up, twin and all, to show me the apartment, and sat down to take breath, "before I was married, when I lived with papa and mama, that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way."

I said: "Yes, ma'am."

Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelming just at present," said Mrs. Micawber; "and whether it is possible to bring him through them, I don't know. When I lived at home with papa and mama, I really should have hardly understood what the word meant, in the sense in which I now employ it, but *experientia*<sup>15</sup> does it—as papa used to say."

I cannot satisfy myself whether she told me that Mr. Micawber had been an officer in the Marines,<sup>16</sup> or whether I have imagined it. I only know that I believe to this hour that he *was* in the Marines once upon a time, without knowing why. He was a sort of town traveller for a number of miscellaneous houses," now; but made little or nothing of it, I am afraid.

"If Mr. Micawber's creditors *will not* give him time," said Mrs. Micawber, "they must take the consequences ; and the sooner they bring it to an issue the better. Blood cannot be obtained from a stone, neither can anything on account be obtained at present (not to mention law expenses) from Mr. Micawber."

I never can quite understand whether my

precocious self-dependence confused Mrs. Micawber in reference to my age, or whether she was so full of the subject that she would have talked about it to the very twins if there had been nobody else to communicate with, but this was the strain in which she began and she went on accordingly all the time I knew her.

Poor Mrs. Micawber ! She said she had tried to exert herself ; and so, I have no doubt, she had. The centre of the street-door was perfectly covered with a great brass-plate, on which was engraved "Mrs. Micawber's boarding Establishment for Young Ladies :" but I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there ; or that any young lady ever came, or proposed to come ; or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. *They* used to come at all hours, and some of them were quite ferocious. One dirty-faced man, I think he was a boot-maker, used to edge himself into the passage as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and call up the stairs to Mr. Micawber—"Come ! You ain't out yet, you know. Pay us, will you ? Don't hide, you know ; that's mean. I wouldn't be mean if I was



you. Pay us, will you? You just pay us, d'ye hear? Come!" Receiving no answer to these taunts, he would mount in his wrath to the words "swindlers" and "robbers;" and these being ineffectual too, would sometimes go to the extremity of crossing the street, and roaring up at the windows of the second floor, where he knew Mr. Micawber was. At these times Mr. Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor; but within half-an-hour afterwards, he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out, humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever. Mrs. Micawber was quite as elastic. I have known her to be thrown into fainting fits by the king's taxes at three o'clock, and to eat lamb-chops breaded, and drink warm ale (paid for with two tea-spoons that had gone to the pawnbroker's) at four. On one occasion, when an execution had just been put in, coming home through some chance as early as six o'clock, I saw her lying (of course with a twin) under the grate in a swoon, with her hair all torn about her face; but I never knew her more cheer-



ful than she was, that very same night, over a veal-cutlet<sup>18</sup> before the kitchen fire, telling me stories about her papa and mama, and the company they used to keep.

In this house, and with this family, I passed my leisure time. My own exclusive breakfast of a penny loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided myself; I kept another small loaf, and a modicum<sup>19</sup> of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. This made a hole in the six or seven shillings, I know well; and I was out at the warehouse all day, and had to support myself on that money all the week. From Monday morning until Saturday night, I had no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no assistance, no support, of any kind, from any one, that I can call to mind, as I hope to go to heaven !

I was so young and childish, and so little qualified—how could I be otherwise ?—to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that often, in going to Murdstone and Grinby's, of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out for sale at half-price at the pastrycooks' doors, and spent

in that, the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then, I went without my dinner, or bought a roll or a slice of pudding. I remember two pudding shops, between which I was divided, according to my finances. One was in a court close to St. Martin's Church—at the back of the church,—which is now removed altogether. The pudding at that shop was made of currants, and was rather a special pudding, but was dear, two-pennyworth not being larger than a pennyworth of more ordinary pudding. A good shop for the latter was in the Strand—somewhere in that part which has been rebuilt since. It was a stout pale pudding, heavy and flabby, and with great flat raisins in it, stuck in whole, at wide distances apart. It came up hot at about my time every day, and many a day did I dine off it. When I dined regularly and handsomely, I had a saveloy<sup>m</sup> and a penny loaf, or a fourpenny plate of red beef from a cook's shop; or a plate of bread and cheese and a glass of beer, from a miserable old public-house<sup>m</sup> opposite our place of business, called the Lion, or the Lion and something else that I have forgotten. Once, I remember carrying my own bread (which I had brought from home in the morning) under

my arm, wrapped in a piece of paper, like a book, and going to a famous *alamode*<sup>22</sup> beef-house near Drury Lane, and ordering a "small plate" of that delicacy to eat with it. What the waiter thought of such a strange little apparition coming in all alone, I don't know; but I can see him now, staring at me as I ate my dinner, and bringing up the other waiter to look. I gave him a halfpenny for himself, and I wish he hadn't taken it.

We had half-an-hour, I think, for tea. When I had money enough, I used to get half-a-pint of ready-made coffee and a slice of bread and butter. When I had none, I used to look at a venison-shop in Fleet Street; or I have strolled, at such a time, as far as Covent Garden Market, and stared at the pineapples. I was fond of wandering about the Adelphi, because it was a mysterious place, with those dark arches. I see myself emerging one evening from some of these arches, on a little public-house close to the river, with an open space before it, where some coal-heavers were dancing; to look at whom I sat down upon a bench. I wonder what they thought of me!

I was such a child, and so little, that frequently

when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter, to moisten what I had had for dinner, they were afraid to give it me. I remember one hot evening I went into the bar of a public-house, and said to the landlord :

“What is your best—your *very best*—ale a glass?” For it was a special occasion. I don’t know what. It may have been my birthday.

“Twopence-halfpenny,” says the landlord, “is the price of the Genuine Stunning ale.”

“Then,” says I, producing the money, “just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head to it.”

The landlord looked at me in return over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face; and instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen and said something to his wife. She came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three, before me now. The landlord in his shirt-sleeves, leaning against the bar window frame; his wife looking over the little half-door, and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. They asked me a good many

questions; as, what my name was, how old I was, where I lived, how I was employed, and how I came there. To all of which, that I might commit nobody, I invented, I am afraid, appropriate answers. They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the Genuine Stunning: and the landlord's wife, opening the little half-door of the bar, and bending down, gave me my money back, and gave me a kiss that was half admiring, and half compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure.

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources or the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling were given me by Mr. Quinion at any time, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. . . I know that I worked from morning until night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

Yet I held some station at Murdstone and



Grinby's too. Besides that Mr. Quinion did what a careless man so occupied, and dealing with a thing so anomalous, could, to treat me as one upon a different footing from the rest, I never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely," no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first, that, if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manner were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They and the men generally spoke of me as "the little gent," or "the young Suffolker." A certain man named Gregory, who was foreman of the packers, and another named Tipp, who was the carman, and wore a red jacket, used to address me sometimes as "David": but I think it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made



some efforts to entertain them, over our work, with some results of the old readings; which were fast perishing out of my remembrance. Mealy Potatoes uprose once, and rebelled against my being so distinguished; but Mick Walker settled him in no time.

My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned, as such, altogether. I am solemnly convinced that I never for one hour was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy; but I bore it; and even to Peggotty, partly for the love of her and partly for shame, never in any letter (though many passed between us) revealed the truth.

Mr. Micawber's difficulties were an addition to the distressed state of my mind. In my forlorn state I became quite attached to the family, and used to walk about, busy with Mrs. Micawber's calculations of ways and means, and heavy with the weight of Mr. Micawber's debts. On a Saturday night, which was my grand treat—partly because it was a great thing to walk home with six or seven shillings in my pocket, looking into the shops and thinking what such a sum would

buy, and partly because I went home early,—Mrs. Micawber would make the most heart-rending confidences to me; also on a Sunday morning, when I mixed the portion of tea or coffee I had bought over-night, in a little shaving-pot, and sat late at my breakfast. It was nothing at all unusual for Mr. Micawber to sob violently at the beginning of one of these Saturday night conversations, and sing about Jack's delight being his lovely Nan,<sup>™</sup> towards the end of it. I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, "in case anything turned up," which was his favourite expression. And Mrs. Micawber was just the same.

A curious equality of friendship, originating, I suppose, in our respective circumstances, sprung up between me and these people, notwithstanding the ludicrous disparity in our years. But I never allowed myself to be prevailed upon to accept any invitation to eat and drink with them out of their stock (knowing that they got on badly with the butcher and baker, and had often not too

much for themselves), until Mrs. Micawber took me into her entire confidence. This she did one evening as follows:

"Master Copperfield," said Mrs. Micawber, "I make no stranger of you, and therefore do not hesitate to say that Mr. Micawber's difficulties are coming to a crisis."

It made me very miserable to hear it, and I looked at Mrs. Micawber's red eyes with the utmost sympathy.

"With the exception of the heel of a Dutch cheese—which is not adapted to the wants of a young family"—said Mrs. Micawber, "there is really not a scrap of anything in the larder. I was accustomed to speak of the larder when I lived with papa and mama, and I use the word almost unconsciously. What I mean to express is, that there is nothing to eat in the house."

"Dear me!" I said, in great concern.

I had two or three shillings of my week's money in my pocket—from which I presume that it must have been on a Wednesday night when we held this conversation—and I hastily produced them, and with heartfelt emotion begged Mrs.

Micawber to accept of them as a loan. But that lady, kissing me, and making me put them back in my pocket, replied that she couldn't think of it.

"No, my dear Master Copperfield," said she, "far be it from my thoughts ! But you have a discretion beyond your years, and can render me another kind of service, if you will ; and a service I will thankfully accept of."

I begged Mrs. Micawber to name it.

"I have parted with the plate myself," said Mrs. Micawber. "Six tea, two salt, and a pair of sugars, I have at different times borrowed money on, in secret, with my own hands. But the twins are a great tie ; and to me, with my recollections of papa and mama, these transactions are very painful. There are still a few trifles that we could part with. Mr. Micawber's feelings would never allow *him* to dispose of them ; and Clickett"—this was the girl from the workhouse—"being of a vulgar mind, would take painful liberties if so much confidence was reposed in her. Master Copperfield, if I might ask you——"

I understood Mrs. Micawber now, and begged her to make use of me to any extent. I began

to dispose of the more portable articles of property that very evening; and went out on a similar expedition almost every morning, before I went to Murdstone and Grinby's.

Mr. Micawber had a few books on a little chiffonier,<sup>33</sup> which he called the library; and those went first. I carried them, one after another, to a bookstall in the City Road—one part of which, near our house, was almost all bookstalls and birdshops then—and sold them for whatever they would bring. The keeper of this bookstall, who lived in a little house behind it, used to get tipsy every night, and to be violently scolded by his wife every morning. More than once, when I went there early, I had audience of him in a turn-up bedstead, with a cut in his forehead or a black eye, bearing witness to his excesses over-night (I am afraid he was quarrelsome in his drink), and he with a shaking hand, endeavouring to find the needful shillings in one or other of the pockets of his clothes, which lay upon the floor, while his wife, with a baby in her arms and her shoes down at heel, never left off rating him. Sometimes he had lost his money, and then he would ask me



to call again; but his wife had always got some—had taken his, I dare say, while he was drunk—and secretly completed the bargain on the stairs, as we went down together.

At the pawnbroker's shop, too, I began to be very well known. The principal gentleman who officiated behind the counter, took a good deal of notice of me; and often got me, I recollect, to decline a Latin noun or adjective, or to conjugate a Latin verb, in his ear, while he transacted my business. After all these occasions Mrs. Micawber made a little treat, which was generally a supper; and there was a peculiar relish in these meals which I well remember.

At last Mr. Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning, and carried over to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me, as he went out of the house, that the God of day had now gone down upon him—and I really thought his heart was broken and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game at skittles, before noon.

On the first Sunday after he was taken there, I was to go and see him, and have dinner with him. I was to ask my way to such a place, and just short of that place I should see such another place, and just short of that I should see a yard, which I was to cross, and keep straight on until I saw a turnkey. All this I did; and when at last I did see a turnkey (poor little fellow that I was!), and thought how, when Roderick Random was in a debtors' prison, there was a man there with nothing on him but an old rug, the turnkey swam before my dimmed eyes and my beating heart.

Mr. Micawber was waiting for me within the gate, and we went up to his room (top storey but one), and cried very much. He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate; and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable. After which he borrowed a shilling of me for porter, gave me a written order on Mrs. Micawber for the amount, and put away his pocket-handkerchief, and cheered up.

We sat before a little fire, with two bricks put within the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals; until another debtor, who shared the room with Mr. Micawber, came in from the bakehouse<sup>28</sup> with the loin of mutton which was our joint-stock repast. Then I was sent up to "Captain Hopkins" in the room overhead, with Mr. Micawber's compliments, and I was his young friend, and would Captain Hopkins lend me a knife and fork.

Captain Hopkins lent me the knife and fork, with his compliments to Mr. Micawber. There was a very dirty lady in his little room, and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought it was better to borrow Captain Hopkin's knife and fork, than Captain Hopkins's comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness<sup>29</sup> with large whiskers, and an old, old brown great-coat with no other coat below it. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner; and what plates and dishes and pots he had, on a shelf, and I divined (God knows how) that though the two girls with the shock heads of hair were Captain Hopkins's children, the dirty,

lady was not married to Captain Hopkins. My timid station on his threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes at most; but I came down again with all this in my knowledge, as surely as the knife and fork were in my hand.

There was something gipsy-like and agreeable in the dinner, after all. I took back Captain Hopkins's knife and fork early in the afternoon, and went home to comfort Mrs. Micawber with an account of my visit. She fainted when she saw me return, and made a little jug of egg-hot<sup>m</sup> afterwards to console us while we talked it over.

I don't know how the household furniture came to be sold for the family benefit, or who sold it, except that I did not. Sold it was, however, and carried away in a van; except the bed, a few chairs, and the kitchen-table. With these possessions we encamped, as it were, in the two parlours of the emptied house in Windsor Terrace; Mrs. Micawber, the children, the Orfling, and myself, and lived in those rooms night and day. I have no idea for how long, though it seems to me for a long time. At last Mrs. Micawber resolved to move into the prison,

where Mr. Micawber had now secured a room to himself. So I took the key of the house to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and the beds were sent over to the King's Bench, except mine, for which a little room was hired outside the walls in the neighbourhood of that Institution, very much to my satisfaction, since the Micawbers and I had become too used to one another, in our troubles, to part. The Orfling was likewise accommodated with an inexpensive lodging in the same neighbourhood. Mine was a quiet back-garret with a sloping roof, commanding a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard, and when I took possession of it, with the reflection that Mr. Micawber's troubles had come to a crisis at last, I thought it quite a paradise.

All this time I was working at Murdstone and Grinby's <sup>in</sup> in the same common way, and with the same common companions, and with the same sense of unmerited degradation as at first. But I never, happily for me no doubt, made a single acquaintance, or spoke to any of the many boys whom I saw daily in going to the warehouse, in coming from it, and in prowling about the streets



at meal-times. I led the same secretly unhappy life; but I led it in the same lonely, self-reliant manner. The only changes I am conscious of are, firstly, that I had grown more shabby, and secondly, that I was now relieved of much of the weight of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber's cares; for some relatives or friends had engaged to help them at their present pass, and they lived more comfortably in the prison than they had lived for a long while out of it. I used to breakfast with them now, in virtue of some arrangement, of which I have forgotten the details. I forget, too, at what hour the gates were opened in the morning, admitting of my going in; but I know that I was often up at six o'clock, and that my favourite lounging-place in the interval was old London Bridge, where I was wont to sit in one of the stone recesses, watching the people going by, or to look over the balustrades at the sun shining in the water, and lighting up the golden flame on the top of the Monument. The Orfling met me here sometimes, to be told some astonishing fictions respecting the wharves and the Tower; of which I can say no more than that I hope I believed them myself. In the evening I used to go back

to the prison, and walk up and down the parade with Mr. Micawber; or play casino<sup>ss</sup> with Mrs. Micawber, and hear reminiscences of her papa and mama. Whether Mr. Murdstone knew where I was, I am unable to say. I never told them at Murdstone and Grinby's.

Mr. Micawber's affairs, although past their crisis, were very much involved by reason of a certain "Deed," of which I used to hear a great deal, and which I suppose, now, to have been some former composition with his creditors, though I was so far from being clear about it then, that I am conscious of having confounded it with those demoniacal parchments which are held to have, once upon a time, obtained to a great extent in Germany. At last this document appeared to be got out of the way, somehow; at all events it ceased to be the rock ahead it had been; and Mrs. Micawber informed me that "her family" had decided that Mr. Micawber should apply for his release under the Insolvent Debtors' Act, which would set him free, she expected, in about six weeks.

“And then,” said Mr. Micawber, who was present, “I have no doubt I shall, please Heaven, begin to be beforehand with the world,” and to live in a perfectly new manner, if—in short, if anything turns up.”

By way of going in for anything that might be on the cards, I call to mind that Mr. Micawber, about this time, composed a petition to the House of Commons, praying for an alteration in the law of imprisonment for debt. I set down this remembrance here, because it is an instance to myself of the manner in which I fitted my old books to my altered life, and made stories for myself, out of the streets, and out of men and women; and how some main points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all this while.

There was a club in the prison, in which Mr. Micawber, as a gentleman, was a great authority. Mr. Micawber had stated his idea of this petition to the club, and the club had strongly approved of the same. Wherefore Mr. Micawber (who was a thoroughly good-natured man, and as active a creature about everything but his own affairs

as ever existed, and never so happy as when he was busy about something that could never be of any profit to him) set to work at the petition, invented it, engrossed it on an immense sheet of paper, spread it out on a table, and appointed a time for all the club, and all within the walls if they chose, to come up to his room and sign it.

When I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another, though I knew the greater part of them already, and they me, that I got an hour's leave of absence from Murdstone and Grinby's, and established myself in a corner for that purpose. As many of the principal members of the club as could be got into the small room without filling it, supported Mr. Micawber in front of the petition, while my old friend Captain Hopkins (who had washed himself, to do honour to so solemn an occasion) stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and the general population began to come in, in a long file: several waiting outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To every body in suc-

cession, Captain Hopkins said: "Have you read it?"—"No." "Would you like to hear it read?" If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Hopkins, in a loud sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. The Captain would have read it twenty thousand times, if twenty thousand people would have heard him, one by one. I remember a certain luscious roll" he gave to such phrases as "The people's representatives in Parliament assembled," "Your petitioners therefore humbly approach your honourable house," "His gracious Majesty's unfortunate subjects," as if the words were something real in his mouth, and delicious to taste; Mr. Micawber, meanwhile, listening with a little of an author's vanity, and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall.

As I walked to and fro daily between Southwark and Blackfriars, and lounged about at meal-times in obscure streets, the stones of which may, for anything I know, be worn at this moment by my childish feet, I wonder how many of these people were wanting in the crowd that used to come filing before me in review again, to the echo



of Captain Hopkins's voice! When my thoughts go back now, to that slow agony of my youth, I wonder how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts! When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things.

## CHAPTER II

### WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

(1811-1863)

[Thackeray shared with Dickens the honour of being "the first novelist of the day", but whereas Dickens came of poor parents, he was born in a family which was comparatively rich and connected with English public schools and Universities. He was born at Calcutta, but at a fairly early age was sent to England to receive his education. He joined Charterhouse School and later Trinity College, Cambridge, though he could not get his degree. After finishing his education he proposed to adopt the profession of an artist but did not make any considerable achievement in this line. He offered to draw illustrations for the books of Charles Dickens, but the latter did not accept his services. After making a few more unsuccessful attempts in this direction, Thackeray gave up the profession of the brush and became instead an artist in words.

He began his literary career as a writer of articles in various magazines. His first articles appeared in Fraser's Magazine and as his fame began to spread he wrote for such standard periodicals as "Punch" and "The Times." With "Punch" his contact lasted for as many as thirteen years, *i.e.*, from 1840 to 1853. Later he became the Editor of the Cornhill Magazine.

Many of his books appeared in parts in the various magazines with which he was connected. As a writer he was not so prolific as Dickens, being a little indolent by nature, but some of the works that he has produced rank among first class fiction not only of the nineteenth century but of all time. They are marked by a close observation of life, raciness of humour and a firm grasp of character. Among his books the following are worthy of mention—"Vanity Fair", which like David Copperfield has a flavour of autobiography, about it, "Henry Esmond", a marvellous historical work with its sequel "The Virginians", and "The Newcomes", which some critics regard as a finished work of art.

Thackeray was also a forceful speaker He

gave two series of lectures, both in England and America, which later appeared in the form of two books, *viz.*, "English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century", and "The Four Georges." He also tried his hand at play-writing in "The Wolves and the Lamb", though not with much success. He fared better in the realm of poetry, where he showed that he could wield his pen with as much facility as in his prose works. But he did not compose much, his best known poems being "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse", and "The Age of Wisdom."

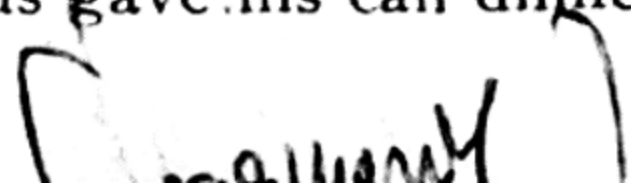
Comparing Dickens with Thackeray we find that they are the monarchs of two different kingdoms. Whereas the former revels in the company of the poor, describes their emotional experiences and seems to share their joys and sorrows, the latter has as his field the lives of the upper classes and shows that if squalor is to be found in the lower strata of society, those better off are not free from malice, meanness and snobbery. From this point of view it may be said that the arts of these two great contemporaries were complementary to each other.

Thackeray's novels are not without a serious purpose which was to reform society through satire. The following selections have been taken from "The Newcomes."]

### COLONEL NEWCOME AT THE "CAVE OF HARMONY"

Going to the play then, and to the pit,<sup>1</sup> as was the fashion in those merry days, with some young fellows of my own age, having listened delighted to the most cheerful and brilliant of operas, and laughed enthusiastically at the farce, we became naturally hungry at twelve o'clock at night, and a desire for welsh-rabbits and good old glee-singing led us to the "Cave of Harmony," then kept by the celebrated Hoskins, among whose friends we were proud to count.

We enjoyed such intimacy with Mr. Hoskins that he never failed to greet us with a kind nod; and John the waiter made room for us near the President of the convivial meeting. We knew the three admirable glee-singers, and many a time they partook of brandy-and-water at our expense. One of us gave his call dinner at Hoskin's, and a





merry time we had of it. Where are you, O Hoskins, bird of the night? Do you warble your songs by Acheron,<sup>2</sup> or troll your choruses by the banks of black Avernus.<sup>3</sup>

The goes of stout,<sup>4</sup> "The Chough and Crow,"<sup>5</sup> the welsh-rabbit, "The Red-Cross Knight,"<sup>6</sup> the hot brandy-and-water (the brown, the strong!), "The bloom is on the Rye"<sup>7</sup> (the bloom isn't on the rye any more!)—the song and the cup, in a word, passed round merrily; and, I dare say, the songs and bumpers were encored.<sup>8</sup> It happened that there was a very small attendance at the "Cave" that night, and we were all more sociable and friendly because the company was select. The songs were chiefly of the sentimental class; such ditties were much in vogue at the time of which I speak.

There came into the "Cave" a gentleman with a lean brown face and long black mustachios, dressed in very loose clothes, and evidently a stranger to the place. At least he had not visited it for a long time. He was pointing out changes to a lad who was in his company; and, calling for

cherry-and-water, he listened to the music, and twirled his mustachios with great enthusiasm.

At the very first glimpse of me the boy jumped up from the table, bounded across the room, ran to me with his hands out, and, blushing, said, "Don't you know me?"

It was little Newcome, my schoolfellow, whom I had not seen for six years, grown a fine tall young stripling now, with the same bright blue eyes which I remembered when he was quite a little boy.

"What the deuce brings you here?" said I.

He laughed and looked roguish. "My father—that's my father—would come. He's just come back from India. He says all the wits used to come here,—Mr. Sheridan', Captain Morris, Colonel Hanger, Professor Porson<sup>8</sup>. I told him your name, and that you used to be very kind to me when I first went to Smithfield. I've left now: I'm to have a private tutor. I say, I've got such a jolly pony. It's better fun than old Smiffle."

Here the whiskered gentleman, Newcome's father, pointing to a waiter to follow him with

his glass of sherry-and-water, strode across the room twirling his mustachios, and came up to the table where we sat, making a salutation with his hat in a very stately and polite manner, so that Hoskins himself was, as it were, obliged to bow; the glee-singers murmured among themselves (their eyes rolling over their glasses towards one another as they sucked brandy-and-water), and that mischievous little wag,<sup>9</sup> little Nadab the Improvisatore<sup>10</sup> (who had just come in), began to mimic him, feeling his imaginary whiskers, after the manner of the stranger, and flapping about his pocket-handkerchief in the most ludicrous manner. Hoskins checked this ribaldry by sternly looking towards Nadab, and at the same time calling upon the gents to give their orders, the waiter being in the room, and Mr. Bellew about to begin a song.

Newcome's father came up and held out his hand to me. I dare say I blushed, for I had been comparing him to the admirable Harley in the "Critic,"<sup>11</sup> and had christened him Don Ferolo Whiskerandos.<sup>12</sup>

He spoke in a voice exceedingly soft and

pleasant, and with a cordiality so simple and sincere, that my laughter shrank away ashamed; and gave place to a feeling much more respectful and friendly. In youth, you see one is touched by kindness. A man of the world may, of course, be grateful or not as he chooses.

"I have heard of your kindness, sir," says he, "to my boy. And whoever is kind to him is kind to me. Will you allow me to sit down by you? and may I beg you to try my cheroots?" We were friends in a minute—young Newcome snuggling by my side, his father opposite, to whom, after a minute or two of conversation, I presented my three college friends.

"You have come here, gentlemen to see the wits," says the Colonel. "Are there any celebrated persons in the room? I have been five-and-thirty years from home, and want to see all that is to be seen."

King of Corpus" (who was an incorrigible wag) was on the point of pulling some dreadful long bow," and pointing out a half-dozen of people in the room, as Rogers, and Hook, and Luttre, etc., the most celebrated wits of that day; but I

cut King's shins under the table, and got the fellow to hold his tongue.

"*Maxima debetur pueris*"<sup>15</sup> says Jones (a fellow of very kind feeling, who has gone into the Church since), and, writing on his card to Hoskins, hinted to him that a boy was in the room, and a gentleman who was quite a greenhorn: hence that the songs had better be carefully selected.

And so they were. A lady's school might have come in, and, but for the smell of the cigars and brandy-and-water, have taken no harm by what happened. Why should it not always be so? If there are any "Caves of Harmony" now, I warrant Messieurs the landlords, their interests would be better consulted by keeping their singers within bounds. The very greatest scamps like pretty songs, and are melted by them; so are honest people. It was worth a guinea to see the simple Colonel, and his delight at the music. He forgot all about the distinguished wits whom he had expected to see in his ravishment over the glees.

"I say, Clive, this is delightful. This is better than your aunt's concert with all the Squallinis, hey? I shall come here often. Landlord, may I venture to ask those gentlemen if they will take



any refreshment? What are their names?" (to one of his neighbours). "I was scarcely allowed to hear any singing before I went out, except an oratorio,<sup>16</sup> where I fell asleep; but this, by George, is fine as Incledon!"<sup>17</sup> He became quite excited over his sherry-and-water—"I'm sorry to see you, gentlemen, drinking brandy-pawnee," says he; "it plays the deuce with our young men in India.") He joined in all the choruses with an exceedingly sweet voice. He laughed at "The Derby Ram" so that it did you good to hear him; and when Hoskins sang (as he did admirably) "The Old English Gentleman," and described, in measured cadence, the death of that venerable aristocrat, tears trickled down the honest warrior's cheek, while he held out his hand to Hoskins and said, "Thank you, sir, for that song; it is an honour to human nature." On which Hoskins began to cry too.

And now young Nadab, having been cautioned, commenced one of those surprising feats of improvisation with which he used to charm audiences. He took us all off, and had rhymes pat<sup>18</sup> about all the principal persons in the room: King's pins (which he wore very splendid), Mar-

tin's red waistcoat, etc. The Colonel was charmed with each feat, and joined delighted with the chorus—"Ritolderol-ritolderol ritolderolderay" (*bis*).<sup>19</sup> And, when coming to the Colonel himself, he burst out—

"A military gent I see—And while his face I scan,

I think you'll all agree with me—He came from Hindostan.

And by his side sits laughing free—A youth with curly head,

I think you'll all agree with me—That he was best in bed. Ritolderol," etc.

The Colonel laughed immensely at this sally and clapped his son, young Clive, on the shoulder: "Hear what he says of you, sir? Clive, best be off to bed, my boy—ho, ho! No, no. We know a trick worth two of that. 'We won't go home till morning, till daylight does appear.' Why should we? Why shouldn't my boy have innocent pleasure? I was allowed none when I was a young chap, and the severity was nearly the ruin of me. I must go and speak with that young man—the most astonishing thing I ever heard in my

life. What's his name? Mr. Nadab? Mr. Nadab; sir, you have delighted me. May I make so free as to ask you to come and dine with me to-morrow at six? Colonel Newcome, if you please, Nerot's Hotel, Clifford Street. I am always proud to make the acquaintance of men of genius, and you are one, or my name is not Newcome!"

"Sir, you do me honour," says Mr. Nadab, pulling up his shirt-collars, "and per'aps the day will come when the world will do me justice. May I put down your honoured name for my book of poems?"

"Of course, my dear sir," says the enthusiastic Colonel, "I'll send them all over India. Put me down for six copies, and do me the favour to bring them to-morrow when you come to dinner."

And now Mr. Hoskins, asking if any gentleman would volunteer a song, what was our amazement when the simple Colonel offered to sing himself, at which the room applauded vociferously; whilst methought poor Clive Newcome hung down his head, and blushed as red as a peony." I felt for the young lad, and thought what my own sensations would have been if, in that place, my

own uncle, Major Pendennis, had suddenly proposed to exert his lyrical powers.

The Colonel selected the ditty of "Wapping Old Stairs" (a ballad so sweet and touching that surely any English poet might be proud to be the father of it), and he sang this quaint and charming old song in an exceedingly pleasant voice, with flourishes and roulades<sup>21</sup> in the old Incledon manner, which has pretty nearly passed away. The singer gave his heart and soul to the simple ballad, and delivered Molly's<sup>22</sup> gentle appeal so pathetically that even the professional gentleman hummed and buzzed a sincere applause; and some wags, who were inclined to jeer at the beginning of the performance, clinked their glasses and rapped their sticks with quite a respectful enthusiasm. When the song was over, Clive held up his head too; after the shock of the first verse, looked round with surprise and pleasure in his eyes; and we, I need not say, backed our friend, delighted to see him come out of his queer scrape so triumphantly. The Colonel bowed and smiled with very pleasant good-nature at our plaudits. It was like Dr. Primrose<sup>23</sup> preaching his sermon in the prison.

There was something touching in the *naivete* and kindness of the placid and simple gentleman.

Great Hoskins, placed on high, amidst the tuneful choir, was pleased to signify his approbation, and gave his guest's health in his usual dignified manner. "I am much obliged to you, sir," says Mr. Hoskins; "the room ought to be much obliged to you: I drink your 'ealth and song, sir;" and he bowed to the Colonel politely over his glass of brandy-and-water, of which he absorbed a little in his customer's honour. "I have not heard that song," he was kind enough to say, "better performed since Mr. Incledon sung it. He was a great singer, sir, and I may say, in the words of our immortal Shakespeare, that, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again."

The Colonel blushed in his turn, and turning round to his boy with an arch smile, said, "I learnt it from Incledon. I used to slip out from Grey Friars to hear him, Heaven bless me forty years ago; and I used to be flogged afterwards, and served me right too. Lord! Lord! how the time passes!" He drank off his sherry-and-water, and fell back in his chair; we could see he was thinking



about his youth—the golden time—the happy, the bright, the unforgotten. I was myself nearly two-and-twenty years of age at that period, and felt as old as, ay, older than the Colonel.

Whilst he was singing his ballad, there had walked, or rather reeled, into the room a gentleman in a military frock-coat and duck trousers of dubious hue, with whose name and person some of my readers are perhaps already acquainted. In fact it was my friend Captain Costigan<sup>25</sup>, in his usual condition at this hour of the night.

Holding on by various tables, the Captain had sidled up, without accident to himself or any of the jugs and glasses round about him, to the table where we sat, and had taken his place near the writer, his old acquaintance. He warbled the refrain of the Colonel's song, not inharmoniously; and saluted its pathetic conclusion with a subdued hiccup, and a plentiful effusion of tears. "Bedad it is a beautiful song," says he, "and many a time I heard poor Harry Incledon sing it."

"He's a great character," whispered that unlucky King of Corpus to his neighbour the Colonel; "was a Captain in the army. We call

him the General. Captain Costigan, will you take something to drink?"

"Bedad I will," says the Captain, "and I'll sing ye a song too."

And, having procured a glass of whisky-and-water from the passing waiter, the poor old man, settling his face into a horrid grin, and leering, as he was wont, when he gave what he called one of his prime songs, began his music.

The unlucky wretch, who scarcely knew what he was doing or saying, selected one of the most outrageous performances of his *repertoire*,<sup>20</sup> fired off a tipsy howl by way of overture, and away he went. At the end of the second verse, the Colonel started up, clapping on his hat, seizing his stick, and looking as ferocious as though he had been going to do battle with a Pindaree.<sup>21</sup> "Silence!" he roared out.

"Hear, hear!" cried certain wags at a farther table. "Go on, Costigan!" said others.

"Go on!" cries the Colonel, in his high voice, trembling with anger. "Does any gentleman say 'Go on?' Does any man who has a wife and

sisters, or children at home, say 'Go on' to such disgusting ribaldry as this? Do you dare, sir, to call yourself a gentleman, and to say that you hold the king's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honour, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash?"

"Why do you bring young boys here, old boy?" cries a voice of the malcontents.

"Why? Because I thought I was coming to a society of gentlemen," cried out the indignant Colonel. "Because I never could have believed that Englishmen could meet together and allow a man, and an old man, so to disgrace himself. For shame, you old wretch! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonour, drunkenness and whisky may bring a man. Never mind the change, sir!—Curse the change!" says the Colonel, facing the amazed waiter. "Keep it till you see me in this place again; which will be never—by George, never!" And shouldering his stick, and scowling round at the company of scared

bacchanalians,<sup>28</sup> the indignant gentleman stalked away, his boy after him.

Clive seemed rather shamefaced; but I fear the rest of the company looked still more foolish.

### NEWCOME BROTHERS

Besides his own boy, whom he worshipped, this kind Colonel had a score, at least of adopted children, to whom he chose to stand in the light of a father. He was for ever whirling away in post-chaises to this school and that, to see Jack Brown's boys, of the Cavalry; or Mrs. Smith's girls, of the Civil Service; or poor Tom Hick's orphan, who had nobody to look after him now that the cholera had carried off Tom, and his wife too. On board the ship in which he returned from Calcutta were a dozen of little children, of both sexes, some of whom he actually escorted to their friends before he visited his own; and though his heart was longing for his boy at Grey Friars. The children at the schools seen, and largely rewarded out of his bounty (his loose white trousers had great pockets, always heavy with gold and silver, which he jingled when he was not pulling his

mustachios—to see the way in which he tipped children made one almost long to be a boy again); and when he had visited Miss Pinkerton's establishment, or Doctor Ramshorn's adjoining academy at Chiswick, and seen little Tom Davis or little Fanny Holmes, the honest fellow would come home and write off straightway a long letter to Tom's or Fanny's parents, far away in the Indian country, whose hearts he made happy by his accounts of their children, as he had delighted the children themselves by his affection and bounty. All the apple and orange women (especially such as had babies as well as lollipops' at their stalls), all the street-sweepers on the road between Nerot's and the Oriental,<sup>2</sup> knew him, and were his pensioners. His brothers in Thread-needle Street cast up their eyes at the cheques which he drew.

One of the little people of whom the kind Newcome had taken charge luckily dwelt near Portsmouth; and when the faithful Colonel consigned Miss Fipps to her grandmother, Mrs. Admiral Fipps, at Southampton, Miss Fipps clung to her guardian, and with tears and howls was



torn away from him. Not until her maiden aunts had consoled her with strawberries, which she never before had tasted, was the little Indian comforted for the departure of her dear Colonel. Master Cox, Tom Cox's boy, of the Native Infantry, had to be carried asleep from the "George" to the mail that night. Master Cox woke up at the dawn wondering, as the coach passed through the pleasant green roads of Bromley. The good gentleman consigned the little chap to his uncle, Doctor Cox, Bloomsbury Square, before he went to his own quarters, and then on the errand on which his fond heart was bent.

He had written to his brothers from Portsmouth, announcing his arrival, and three words to Clive, conveying the same intelligence. The letter was served to the boy along with one bowl of tea and one buttered roll, of eighty such which were distributed to fourscore other boys, boarders of the same house with our young friend. How the lad's face must have flushed, and his eyes brightened, when he read the news! When the master of the house, the Rev. Mr. Hopkinson, came into the long-room, with a good-natured

face, and said, "Newcome, you're wanted," he knows who is come. He does not heed that notorious bruiser,<sup>3</sup> old Hodge, who roars out, "Confound you, Newcome: I'll give it you' for upsetting your tea over my new trousers." He runs to the room where the stranger is waiting for him. We will shut the door, if you please, upon that scene.

If Clive had not been as fine and handsome a young lad as any in that school or country, no doubt his fond father would have been just as well pleased, and endowed him with a hundred fanciful graces; but, in truth, in looks and manners he was everything which his parent could desire. He is not yet endowed with those splendid mustachios and whiskers which he has himself subsequently depicted, but he is the picture of health, strength, activity, and good-humour. He has a good forehead, shaded with a quantity of waving light hair; a complexion which ladies might envy; a mouth which seems accustomed to laughing; and a pair of blue eyes that sparkle with intelligence and frank kindness. No wonder the pleased father cannot re-

frain from looking at him. He is, in a word, just such a youth as has a right to be the hero of a novel.

The bell rings for second school, and Mr. Hopkinson, arrayed in cap and gown, comes in to shake Colonel Newcome by the hand, and to say he supposes it's to be a holiday for Newcome that day. He does not say a word about Clive's scrape of the day before, and that awful row in the bedrooms, where the lad and three others were discovered making a supper off a porkpie and two bottles of prime old port from the Red Cow public-house in Grey Friars Lane. When the bell has done ringing, and all these busy little bees have swarmed into their hive, there is a solitude in the place. The Colonel and his son walk the playground together, that gravelly flat, as destitute of herbage as the Arabian desert, but, nevertheless, in the language of the place, called the green. They walk the green, and they pace the cloisters, and Clive shows his father his own name of Thomas Newcome carved upon one of the arches forty years ago. As they talk, the boy gives sidelong glances at his new friend, and

wonders at the Colonel's loose trousers, long mustachios, and yellow face. He looks very odd, Clive thinks, very odd and very kind, and he looks like a gentleman, every inch of him;—not like Martin's father, who came to see his son lately in high-lows<sup>6</sup> and a shocking bad hat, and actually flung coppers amongst the boys for a scramble. He bursts out a-laughing at the exquisitely ludicrous idea of a gentleman of his fashion scrambling for coppers.

And now, enjoining the boy to be ready against his return (and you may be sure Mr. Clive was on the look-out long before his sire appeared), the Colonel whirled away in his cab to the City to shake hands with his brothers, whom he had not seen since they were demure little men in blue jackets, under charge of a serious tutor.

He rushed through the clerks and the banking-house, he broke into the parlour where the lords of the establishment were seated. He astonished those trim quiet gentlemen by the warmth of his greeting, by the vigour of his handshake, and the loud high tones of his voice, which

penetrated the glass walls of the parlour, and might actually be heard by the busy clerks in the hall without. He knew Brian from Hobson's at once—that unlucky little accident in the go-cart' having left its mark for ever on the nose of Sir Brian Newcome, the elder of the twins. Sir Brian had a bald head and light hair, a short whisker cut to his cheek, a buff waistcoat, very neat boots and hands. He looked like the "Portrait of a Gentleman" at the Exhibition, as the worthy is represented: dignified in attitude, bland, smiling, and statesmanlike, sitting at a table unsealing letters, with a dispatchbox and a silver inkstand before him, a column and a scarlet curtain behind, and a park in the distance, with a great thunderstorm lowering in the sky. Such a portrait, in fact, hangs over the great sideboard at Newcome to this day, and above the three great silver waiters' which the gratitude of as many Companies has presented to their respected director and chairman.

In face Hobson Newcome, Esquire, was like his elder brother, but was more portly in person. He allowed his red whiskers to grow wherever



Nature had planted them, on his cheeks and under his chin. He wore thick shoes with nails in them, or natty round-toed boots, with tight trousers and a single strap. He affected the country gentleman in his appearance. His hat had a broad brim, and the ample pockets of his cutaway coat<sup>9</sup> were never destitute of agricultural produce, samples of beans of corn, which he used to bite and chew even on 'Change, or a whiplash,<sup>10</sup> or balls for horses : in fine, he was a good old country gentleman. If it was fine in Threadneedle Street, he would say it was good weather for the hay; if it rained, the country wanted rain; if it was frosty, "No hunting to-day, Tomkins, my boy," and so forth.

As he rode from Bryanstone Square to the City you would take him—and he was pleased to be so taken—for a jolly country squire. He was a better man of business than his more solemn and stately brother, at whom he laughed in his jocular way; and he said rightly, that a gentleman must get up very early in the morning who wanted to take *him* in.

The Colonel breaks into the sanctum of these

worthy gentlemen; and each receives him in a manner consonant with his peculiar nature. Sir Brian regretted that Lady Ann<sup>n</sup> was away from London, being at Brighton with the children, who were all ill of the measles. Hobson said, "Maria" can't treat you to such good company as my Lady could give you; but when will you take a day and come and dine with us? Let's see, to-day's Wednesday : to-morrow we've a party. No, we're engaged." He meant that his table was full, and that he did not care to crowd it; but there was no use in imparting this circumstance to the Colonel. "Friday we dine at Judge Budge's—queer name, Judge Budge, ain't it? Saturday, I'm going down to Marble Head, to look after the hay. Come on Monday, Tom, and I'll introduce you to the missus and the young uns."

"I will bring Clive," says Colonel Newcome, rather disturbed at this reception. "After his illness my sister-in-law was very kind to him."

"No, hang it, don't bring boys; there's no good in boys; they stop the talk downstairs, and the ladies don't want 'em in the drawing-room. Send him to dine with the children on Sunday,

if you like, and come along down with me to Marble Head, and I'll show you such a crop of hay as will make your eyes open. Are you fond of farming?"

"I have not seen my boy for years," says the Colonel; "I had rather pass Saturday and Sunday with him, if you please, and some day we will go to Marble Head together."

"Well, an offer's an offer. I don't know any pleasanter thing than getting out of this confounded City and smelling the hedges, and looking at the crops coming up, and passing the Sunday in quiet." And his own tastes being thus agricultural, the worthy gentleman thought that everybody else must delight in the same recreation.

"In the winter, I hope we shall see you at Newcome," says the elder brother, blandly smiling. "I can't give you any tiger-shooting, but I'll promise you that you shall find plenty of pheasants in our jungle," and he laughed very gently at this mild sally.

The Colonel gave him a queer look. "I shall be at Newcome before the winter. I shall be there, please God, before many days are over."

"Indeed !" says the Baronet, with an air of great surprise. "You are going down to look at the cradle of our race. I believe the Newcomes were there before the Conqueror. It was but a village in our grandfather's time, and it is an immense flourishing town now, for which I hope to get—I expect to get—a charter."<sup>18</sup>

"Do you?" says the Colonel. "I am going down there to see a relation."

"A relation! What relatives have we there?" cries the Baronet. "My children, with the exception of Barnes." Barnes, this is your uncle Colonel Thomas Newcome. I have great pleasure, brother, in introducing you to my eldest son."

A fair-haired young gentleman, languid and pale, and arrayed in the very height of fashion, made his appearance at this juncture in the parlour, and returned Colonel Newcome's greeting with a smiling acknowledgment of his own. "Very happy to see you, I'm sure," said the young man. "You find London very much changed since you were here? Very good time to come—the very full of the season."

Poor Thomas Newcome was quite abashed by

this strange reception. Here was a man, hungry for affection, and one relation asked him to dinner next Monday, and another invited him to shoot pheasants at Christmas. Here was a beardless young sprig, who patronised him, and vouchsafed to ask him whether he found London was changed.

"I don't know whether it's changed," says the Colonel, biting his nails; "I know it's not what I expected to find it."

"To-day it's really as hot as I should think it must be in India," says young Mr. Barnes Newcome.

"Hot!" says the Colonel, with a grin. "It seems to me you are all cool enough here."

"Just what Sir Thomas de Boots said, sir," says Barnes, turning round to his father. "Don't you remember when he came home from Bombay? I recollect his saying, at Lady Featherstone's, one 'dooched' hot night, as it seemed to us; I recollect his saying that he felt quite cold. Did you know him in India, Colonel Newcome? He's liked at the Horse Guards, but he's hated in his regiment."

Colonel Newcome here growled a wish re-



garding the ultimate fate of Sir Thomas de Boots, which we trust may never be realised by that distinguished cavalry officer.

"My brother says he's going to Newcome, Barnes, next week," said the Baronet, wishing to make the conversation more interesting to the newly-arrived Colonel. "He was saying so just when you came in, and I was asking him what took him there?"

"Did you ever hear of Sarah Mason?"<sup>18</sup> says the Colonel.

"Really, I never did," the Baronet answered.

"Sarah Mason? No, upon my word, I don't think I ever did," said the young man.

"Well, that's a pity too," the Colonel said, with a sneer. "Mrs. Mason is a relation of yours—at least by marriage. She is my aunt or cousin—I used to call her aunt, and she and my father and mother all worked in the same mill at Newcome together."

"I remember—God bless my soul—I remember now!" cries the Baronet. "We pay her forty pound a year on your account—don't you know, brother? Look to Colonel Newcome's account—I recollect the name quite well. But I thought

she had been your nurse, and—and an old servant of my father's."

"So she was my nurse, and an old servant of my father's," answered the Colonel. "But she was my mother's cousin too; and very lucky was my mother to have such a servant, or to have a servant at all. There is not in the whole world a more faithful creature or a better woman."

Mr. Hobson rather enjoyed his brother's perplexity, and to see, when the Baronet rode the high horse," how he came down sometimes. "I am sure it does you very great credit," gasped the courtly head of the firm, "to remember a—a humble friend and connection of our father's so well."

"I think, brother, you might have recollected her too," the Colonel growled out. His face was blushing: he was quite angry and hurt at what seemed to him Sir Brian's hardness of heart.

"Pardon me if I don't see the necessity," said Sir Brian. "I have no relationship with Mrs. Mason, and do not remember ever having seen her. Can I do anything for you, brother? Can I be useful to you in any way? Pray command me and Barnes here, who, after City hours, will be delighted if he can be serviceable to you—I am

nailed to this counter all the morning, and to the House of Commons all night;—I will be with you in one moment. Mr. Quilter. Good-bye, my dear Colonel. How well India has agreed with you! how young you look! the hot winds are nothing to what we endure in Parliament. “Hobson,” in a low voice, “you saw about that hm—that power of attorney—and hm and hm will call here at twelve about that hm. I am sorry I must say good-bye—it seems so hard after not meeting for so many years.”

“Very,” says the Colonel.

“Mind and send for me whenever you want me, now.”

“Oh, of course,” said the elder brother, and thought, when will that ever be?

“Lady Ann will be too delighted at hearing of your arrival. Give my love to Clive—a remarkable fine boy, Clive—good morning:” and the Baronet was gone, and his bald head might presently be seen alongside of Mr. Quilter’s confidential grey poll,<sup>18</sup> both of their faces turned into an immense ledger.

Mr. Hobson accompanied the Colonel to the door, and shook him cordially by the hand as he got into his cab. The man asked whither he

should drive? and poor Newcome hardly knew where he was or whither he should go. "Drive! a—oh—ah—damme, drive me anywhere away from this place!" was all he could say; and very likely the cabman thought he was a disappointed debtor who had asked in vain to renew a bill. In fact, Thomas Newcome had overdrawn his little account. There was no such balance of affection in that bank of his brothers, as the simple creature had expected to find there.

When he was gone, Sir Brian went back to his parlour, where sat young Barnes perusing the paper. "My revered uncle seems to have brought back a quantity of cayenne pepper from India," sir," he said to his father.

"He seems a very kind-hearted simple man," the Baronet said: "eccentric, but he has been more than thirty years away from home. Of course you will call upon him to-morrow morning. Do everything you can to make him comfortable. Whom would he like to meet at dinner? I will ask some of the *Diréction*. Ask him, Barnes, for next Wednesday or Saturday—no: Saturday I dine with the Speaker. But see that every attention is paid him."

"Does he intend to have our relation up to town, sir? I should like to meet Mrs. Mason of all things. A venerable washerwoman, I dare-say, or perhaps keeps a public-house," simpered out young Barnes.

"Silence, Barnes; you jest at everything, you young men do—you do. Colonel Newcome's affection for his old nurse does him the greatest honour," said the Baronet, who really meant what he said.

"And I hope my mother will have her to stay a good deal at Newcome. I'm sure she must have been a washerwoman, and mangled my uncle in early life. His costume struck me with respectful astonishment. He disdains the use of straps to his trousers, and is seemingly unacquainted with gloves. If he had died in India, would my late aunt have had to perish on a funeral pile?" Here Mr. Quilter, entering with a heap of bills, put an end to these sarcastic remarks, and young Newcome, applying himself to his business (of which he was a perfect master), forgot about his uncle till after City hours, when he entertained some young gentlemen of Bays's Club with an account of his newly-arrived relative.



### CHAPTER III

## GEORGE ELIOT (MARIAN EVANS) (1819-1880)

[George Eliot was the pen-name of Marian Evans, one of the most highly cultured English women of the nineteenth century. She began her literary career by writing essays for magazines like the Westminster Review and others. It was George Henry Lewes, one of the leaders of the intellectualist revolt against orthodoxy, with whom she had contracted an intimate friendship, who introduced her to the world of fiction and made her discover her talents as a novelist. She wrote one after the other "The Scenes of Clerical Life," "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss" and "Silas Marner," and established her reputation as a great observer of "the small facts and oddities" of human life. Her writings are marked by a sense of humour and pathos which is touching but not sentimental. She also wrote some poems which appeared under the title of "The Spanish Gipsy".

Her later writings lack much of that freshness

and artistic creation which are to be found in her earlier works. "Romola", a story of the Italian renaissance, is more a work of labour than of genius, and the same can be said about "Middlemarch" and "Daniel Deronda". Her companion, George Lewes, having died in 1878, she married Mr. John Cross in May 1880 but died in December of the same year.

George Eliot ranks amongst the greatest writers of English fiction. She was a great realist and drew upon the incidents and experiences of her own life for the material of her novels. She is a pioneer of the modern psychological novel and penetrates behind the veil into the internal conflicts and struggles of her characters. She follows the process of deliberation in their minds and portrays the struggle between the call for personal happiness and the demands of the social conscience. Her aim is through and through moral, for she attempts to show that it is only through living for others that we can find happiness for ourselves.

The following extracts are taken from "Adam Bede", which is a story of the strong interaction

of various human emotions, such as pure love, blind passion, idle vanity and thoughtless ambition.]

### THE DAIRY

The dairy was certainly worth looking at: it was a scene to sicken for<sup>1</sup> with a sort of calenture<sup>2</sup> in hot and dusty streets—such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new-pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessel perpetually bathed in pure water; such soft colouring of red earthenware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished, tin, gray limestone and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights and hooks and hinges. But one gets only a confused notion of these details when they surround a distractingly pretty girl of seventeen, standing on little pattens<sup>3</sup> and rounding her dimpled arm to lift a pound of butter out of the scale.

Hetty blushed a deep rose-colour when Captain Donnithorne entered the dairy and spoke to her, but it was not at all a distressed blush, for it was enwreathed with smiles and dimples, and with sparkles from under long-curved dark eyelashes; and while her aunt was discoursing to him about

the limited amount of milk that was to be spared for butter and cheese so long as the calves were not all weaned, and the large quantity but inferior quality of milk yielded by the short-horn,\* which had been bought on experiment, together with other matters which must be interesting to a young gentleman who would one day be a landlord, Hetty tossed and patted her pound of butter with quite a self-possessed, coquettish air, slyly conscious that no turn of her head was lost.

There are various orders of beauty, causing men to make fools of themselves in various styles, from the desperate to the sheepish; but there is one order of beauty which seems made to turn the heads not only of men, but of all intelligent mammals, even of women. It is a beauty like that of kittens, or very small, downy ducks making gentle rippling noises with their soft bills, or babies just beginning to toddle and to engage in conscious mischief—a beauty with which you can never be angry, but that you feel ready to crush for inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you. Hetty Sorrel's was that sort of beauty. Her aunt, Mrs. Poyser, who professed to despise all personal attractions and

intended to be the severest of mentors,<sup>6</sup> continually gazed at Hetty's charms by the sly,<sup>9</sup> fascinated in spite of herself; and after administering such a scolding as naturally flowed from her anxiety to do well by her husband's niece—who had no mother of her own to scold her, poor thing!—she would often confess to her husband, when they were safe out of hearing, that she firmly believed “the naughtier the little huzzy behaved, the prettier she looked.”

It is of little use for me to tell you that Hetty's cheek was like a rose-petal, that dimples played about her pouting lips, that her large dark eyes hid a soft roguishness under their long lashes, and that her curly hair, though all pushed back under her round cap while she was at work, stole back in dark, delicate rings on her forehead, and about her white, shell-like ears; it is of little use for me to say how lovely was the contour of her pink and white neckerchief, tucked into her low, plum-coloured stuff bodice,<sup>7</sup> or how the linen to be imitated in silk by duchesses, since it fell butter-making apron, with its bib, seemed a thing in such charming lines, or how her brown stockings and thick-soled buckled shoes lost all that



clumsiness which they must certainly have had when empty of her foot and ankle—of little use, unless you have seen a woman who affected you as Hetty affected her beholders, for otherwise, though you might conjure up the image of a lovely woman, she would not in the least resemble that distracting kitten-like maiden. I might mention all the divine charms of a bright spring day, but if you had never in your life utterly forgotten yourself in straining your eyes after the mounting lark, or in wandering through the still lanes when the fresh-opened blossoms fill them with a sacred, silent beauty like that of fretted aisles,<sup>9</sup> where would be the use of my descriptive catalogue? I could never make you know what I meant by a bright spring day. Hetty's was a spring-tide beauty; it was the beauty of young frisking things, round-limbed, gambolling, circumventing<sup>10</sup> you by a false air of innocence—the innocence of a young star-browed calf, for example, that, being inclined for a promenade,<sup>11</sup> out of bounds, leads you a severe steeplechase,<sup>12</sup> over hedge and ditch, and only comes to a stand in the middle of a bog.

And they are the prettiest attitudes and

movements into which a pretty girl is thrown in making up butter—tossing movements that give a charming curve to the arm, and a sideward inclination of the round, white neck; little patting and rolling movements with the palm of the hand, and nice adaptations and finishings which cannot at all be effected without a great play of the pouting mouth and the dark eyes. And then the butter itself seems to communicate a fresh charm—it is so pure, so sweet-scented; it is turned off the mould with such a beautiful firm surface, like marble in a pale yellow light! Moreover, Hetty was particularly clever at making up the butter; it was the one performance of hers that her aunt allowed to pass without severe criticism; so she handled it with all the grace that belongs to mastery.

“I hope you will be ready for a great holiday on the thirtieth of July” Mrs. Poyser,” said Captain Donnithorne, when he had sufficiently admired the dairy, and given several improvised opinions on Swede turnips and short-horns. “You know what is to happen then, and I shall expect you to be one of the guests who come earliest and leave latest. Will you promise me your hand for

two dances, Miss Hetty? If I don't get your promise now I know I shall hardly have a chance, for all the smart young farmers will take care to secure you."

Hetty smiled and blushed, but before she could answer, Mrs. Poyser interposed, scandalised at the mere suggestion that the young squire could be excluded by any meaner partners.

"Indeed, sir, you're very kind to take that notice of her. And I'm sure, whenever you're pleased to dance with her, she'll be proud and thankful, if she stood still all the rest o' th' evening."

"Oh no, no, that would be too cruel to all the other young fellows who can dance. But you will promise me two dances, won't you?" the Captain continued, determined to make Hetty look at him and speak to him.

Hetty dropped the prettiest little courtesy,<sup>18</sup> and stole a half-shy, half coquettish glance at him as she said,—

"Yes, thank you, sir."

"And you must bring all your children, you know, Mrs. Poyser; your little Totty, as well as

the boys. I want all the youngest children on the estate to be there—all those who will be fine young men and women when I'm a bald old fellow."

"Oh dear, sir, that 'ull be a long time first," said Mrs. Poyser, quite overcome at the young squire's speaking so lightly of himself, and thinking how her husband would be interested in hearing her recount this remarkable specimen of high-born humour. The Captain was thought to be "very full of his jokes," and was a great favourite throughout the estate on account of his free manners. Every tenant was quite sure things would be different when the reins got into his hands—there was to be a millennial abundance of new gates,<sup>14</sup> allowances of lime,<sup>15</sup> and returns of ten per cent.<sup>16</sup>

"But where is Totty to-day?" he said. "I want to see her."

"Where is the little 'un, Hetty?" said Mrs. Poyser. "She came in here not long ago."

"I don't know. She went into the brewhouse to Nancy," I think."

The proud mother, unable to resist the temp-

tation to show her Totty, passed at once into the back-kitchen, in search of her, not, however, without misgivings lest something should have happened to render her person and attire unfit for presentation.

"And do you carry the butter to market when you've made it?" said the Captain to Hetty, meanwhile.

"Oh no, sir; not when it's so heavy; I'm not strong enough to carry it. Alick<sup>18</sup> takes it on horseback."

"No, I'm sure your pretty arms were never meant for such heavy weights. But you go out for a walk sometimes these pleasant evenings, don't you? Why don't you have a walk in the Chase sometimes, now it's so green and pleasant? I hardly ever see you anywhere except at home and at church."

"Aunt doesn't like me to go a-walking, only when I'm going somewhere," said Hetty. "But I go through the Chase sometimes."

"And don't you ever go to see Mrs. Best, the housekeeper? I think I saw you once in the housekeeper's room."



"It isn't Mrs. Best, it's Mrs. Pomfret, the lady's maid, as I go to see. She's teaching me tent-stitch and the lace-mending. I'm going to tea with her to-morrow afternoon."

The reason why there had been space for this *tête-à-tête*<sup>19</sup> can only be known by looking into the back-kitchen, where Totty had been discovered rubbing a stray blue-bag against her nose, and in the same moment allowing some liberal indigo drops to fall on her afternoon pinafore.<sup>20</sup> But now she appeared holding her mother's hand—the end of her round nose rather shiny from a recent and hurried application of soap and water.

"Here she is!" said the Captain, lifting her up and setting her on the low stone shelf. "Here's Totty! By the bye, what's her other name? She wasn't christened Totty."

"Oh, sir, we call her sadly out of her name. Charlotte's her christened name. It's a name i' Mr. Poyser's family: his grandmother was named Charlotte. But we began with calling her Lotty, and now it's got to Totty. To be sure it's more like a name for a dog than a Christian child."

"Totty's a capital name. Why, she looks like a Totty. Has she got a pocket on?" said the Captain, feeling in his own waistcoat pockets.

Totty immediately with great gravity lifted up her frock and showed a tiny pink pocket at present in a state of collapse.<sup>21</sup>

"It dot notin' in it," she said, as she looked down at it very earnestly.

"No! what a pity! such a pretty pocket. Well, I think I've got some things in mine that will make a pretty jingle in it. Yes! I declare I've got five little round silver things, and hear what a pretty noise they make in Totty's pink pocket." Here he shook the pocket with the five sixpences in it, and Totty showed her teeth and wrinkled her nose in great glee; but divining that there was nothing more to be got by staying, she jumped off the shelf and ran away to jingle her pocket in the hearing of Nancy, while her mother called after her, "Oh, for shame, you naughty gell!" not to thank the Captain for what he's given you. I'm sure, sir, it's very kind of you; but she's spoiled shameful; her father won't have her said nay in anything, and there's no managing her. It's being the youngest, and th' only gell."

"Oh, she's a funny little fatty; I wouldn't have her different. But I must be going now, for I suppose the Rector is waiting for me."

With a "good-bye," a bright glance, and a bow to Hetty, Arthur left the dairy.

### A CRISIS

The buildings of the Chase Farm<sup>1</sup> lay at one extremity of the Chase, at about ten minutes' walking distance from the Abbey. Adam had come thither on his pony, intending to ride to the stables and put up his nag on his way home. At the stables he encountered Mr. Craig,<sup>2</sup> who had come to look at the Captain's new horse, on which he was to ride away the day after to-morrow; and Mr. Craig detained him to tell how all the servants were to collect at the gate of the courtyard to wish the young Squire<sup>3</sup> luck as he rode out; so that, by the time Adam had got into the Chase, and was striding along with the basket of tools over his shoulder, the sun was on the point of setting, and was sending level crimson rays among the great trunks of the old oaks, and touching every bare patch of ground with a transient glory that made it look like a jewel dropped upon the

grass. The wind had fallen now, and there was only enough breeze to stir the delicate-stemmed leaves. Any one who had been sitting in the house all day would have been glad to walk now; but Adam had been quite enough in the open air to wish to shorten his way home; and he bethought himself that he might do so by striking across the Chase and going through the Grove, where he had never been for years. He hurried on across the Chase, stalking along the narrow paths between the fern, with Gyp<sup>s</sup> at his heels, not lingering to watch the magnificent changes of the light—hardly once thinking of it—yet feeling its presence in a certain calm, happy awe which mingled itself with his busy, working-day thoughts. How could he help feeling it? The very deer felt it, and were more timid.

Presently Adam's thought recurred to what Mr. Craig had said about Arthur Donnithorne, and pictured his going away, and the changes that might take place before he came back; then they travelled back affectionately over the old scenes of boyish companionship, and dwelt on Arthur's good qualities, which Adam had a pride

in, as we all have in the virtues of the superior who honours us. A nature like Adam's, with a great need of love and reverence in it, depends for so much of its happiness on what it can believe and feel about others! And he had no ideal world of dead heroes: he knew little of the life of men in the past; he must find the beings to whom he could cling with loving admiration among those who came within speech of him. These pleasant thoughts about Arthur brought a milder expression than usual into his keen, rough face: perhaps they were the reasons why, when he opened the old green gate leading into the Grove, he paused to pat Gyp, and say a kind word to him.

After that pause he strode on again along the broad, winding path through the Grove. What grand beeches! Adam delighted in a fine tree of all things: as the fisherman's sight is keenest on the sea, so Adam's perceptions were more at home with trees than with other objects. He kept them in his memory, as a painter does, with all the flecks and knots in their bark, all the curves and angles of their boughs; and had often calculated the height and contents of a trunk to



a nicety, as he stood looking at it. No wonder that, notwithstanding his desire to get on, he could not help pausing to look at a curious large beech which he had seen standing before him at a turning in the road, and convince himself that it was not two trees wedded together, but only one. For the rest of his life he remembered that moment when he was calmly examining the beech, as a man remembers his last glimpse of the home where his youth was passed, before the road turned, and he saw it no more. The beech stood at the last turning before the Grove ended in an archway of boughs that let in the eastern light; and as Adam stepped away from the tree to continue his walk his eyes fell on two figures about twenty yards before him.

He remained as motionless as a statue, and turned almost as pale. The two figures were standing opposite to each other, with clasped hands, about to part; and while they were bending to kiss, Gyp, who had been running among the brushwood, came out, caught sight of them, and gave a sharp bark. They separated with a start—one hurried through the gate out of the Grove.

and the other, turning round, walked slowly, with a sort of saunter, towards Adam, who still stood transfixed and pale, clutching tighter the stick with which he held the basket of tools over his shoulder, and looking at the approaching figure with eyes in which amazement was fast turning to fierceness.

Arthur Donnithorne looked flushed and excited; he had tried to make unpleasant feelings more bearable by drinking a little more wine than usual at dinner to-day, and was still enough under its flattering influence to think more lightly of this unwished-for rencontre<sup>o</sup> with Adam than he would otherwise have done. After all, Adam was the best person who could have happened to see him and Hetty together: he was a sensible fellow, and would not babble about it to other people. Arthur felt confident that he could laugh the thing off, and explain it away. And so he sauntered forward with elaborate carelessness—his flushed face, his evening dress of fine cloth and fine linen, his white, jewelled hands half thrust into his waistcoat pockets, all shone upon by the strange evening light which the light clouds had

caught up even to the zenith, and were now shedding down between the topmost branches above him.

Adam was still motionless, looking at him as he came up. He understood it all now—the locket,<sup>7</sup> and everything else that had been doubtful to him: a terrible scorching light showed him the hidden letters that changed the meaning of the past. If he had moved a muscle, he must inevitably have sprung upon Arthur like a tiger; and in the conflicting emotions that filled those long moments he had told himself that he would not give loose to<sup>8</sup> passion, he would only speak the right thing. He stood as if petrified by an unseen force, but the force was his own strong will.

“Well, Adam,” said Arthur, “you’ve been looking at the fine old beeches, eh? They’re not to be come near by the hatchet,<sup>9</sup> though; this is a sacred grove. I overtook pretty little Hetty Sorrel as I was coming to my den—the Hermitage,<sup>10</sup>” there. She ought not to come home this way so late. So I took care of her to the gate, and asked for a kiss for my pains. But I must get back now, for this road is confoundedly damp.

Good-night, Adam: I shall see you to-morrow—to say good-bye, you know.”

Arthur was too much preoccupied with the part he was playing himself to be thoroughly aware of the expression in Adam's face. He did not look directly at Adam, but glanced carelessly round at the trees, and then lifted up one foot to look at the sole of his boot. He cared to say no more; he had thrown quite dust enough into honest Adam's eyes; and as he spoke the last words he walked on.

“Stop a bit, sir,” said Adam, in a hard, peremptory voice, without turning round. “I've got a word to say to you.”

Arthur paused in surprise. Susceptible persons are more affected by a change of tone than by unexpected words, and Arthur had the susceptibility of a nature at once affectionate and vain. He was still more surprised when he saw that Adam had not moved, but stood with his back to him, as if summoning him to return. What did he mean? He was going to make a serious business of this affair. Confound the fellow! Arthur felt his temper rising. A patronising disposition

always has its meaner side, and in the confusion of his irritation and alarm there entered the feeling that a man to whom he had shown so much favour as to Adam, was not in a position to criticise his conduct. And yet he was dominated, as one who feels himself in the wrong always is, by the man whose good opinion he cares for. In spite of pride and temper, there was as much depreciation" as anger in his voice when he said,—

"What do you mean, Adam?"

"I mean, sir," answered Adam, in the same harsh voice, still without turning round, "I mean, sir, that you don't deceive me by your light words. This is not the first time you've met Hetty Sorrel in this grove, and this is not the first time you've kissed her."

Arthur felt a startled uncertainty how far Adam was speaking from knowledge and how far from inference. And this uncertainty, which prevented him from contriving a prudent answer, heightened his irritation. He said, in a high, sharp tone,—

"Well, sir, what then?"

"Why, then, instead of acting like the up-



right, honourable man we've all believed you to be, you've been acting the part of a selfish, light-minded<sup>12</sup> scoundrel. You know as well as I do what it's to lead to when a gentleman like you kisses and makes love to a woman like Hetty, and gives her presents as she's frightened for other folks to see. And I say it again, you're acting the part of a selfish, light-minded scoundrel, though it cuts me to th' heart to say so, and I'd rather ha' lost my right hand."<sup>13</sup>

"Let me tell you, Adam," said Arthur, bridling his growing anger, and trying to recur to his careless tone, "you're not only devilishly impertinent, but you're talking nonsense. Every pretty girl is not such a fool as you, to suppose that when a gentleman admires her beauty, and pays her a little attention, he must mean something particular. Every man likes to flirt with a pretty girl, and every pretty girl likes to be flirted with. The wider the distance between them the less harm there is, for then she's not likely to deceive herself."

"I don't know what you mean by flirting," said Adam, "but if you mean behaving to a woman as if you loved her, and yet not loving her

all the while, I say that's not th' action of an honest man, and what isn't honest does come t' harm. I'm not a fool, and you're not a fool, and you know better than what you're saying. You know it couldn't be made public as you've behaved to Hetty as y' have done, without her losing her character, and bringing shame and trouble on her and her relations. What if you meant nothing by your kissing and your presents? Other folks won't believe as you've meant nothing: and don't tell me about her not deceiving herself. I tell you as you've filled her mind so with the thought of you as it'll mayhap poison her life, and she'll never love another man as 'ud make her a good husband."

Arthur had felt a sudden relief while Adam was speaking; he perceived that Adam had no positive knowledge of the past, and that there was no irrevocable damage done by this evening's unfortunate rencontre. Adam could still be deceived. The candid Arthur had brought himself into a position in which successful lying was his only hope. The hope allayed his anger a little.

"Well, Adam," he said, in a tone of friendly concession, "you're perhaps right. Perhaps I've

gone a little too far in taking notice of the pretty little thing, and stealing a kiss now and then. You're such a grave, steady fellow, you don't understand the temptation to such flirting. I'm sure I wouldn't bring any trouble or annoyance on her and the good Poyzers" on any account if I could help it. But I think you look a little too seriously at it. You know I'm going away immediately, so I shan't make any more mistakes of the kind. But let us say good-night"—Arthur here turned round to walk on—"and talk no more about the matter. The whole thing will soon be forgotten."

"No, by God!" Adam burst out, with rage that could be controlled no longer, throwing down the basket of tools, and striding forward till he was right in front of Arthur. All his jealousy and sense of personal injury, which he had been hitherto trying to keep under, had leaped up and mastered him. What man of us, in the first moments of a sharp agony, could ever feel that the fellow-man who has been the medium of inflicting it, did not mean to hurt us? In our instinctive rebellion against pain, we are children again, and demand

an active will to wreak our vengeance on. Adam at this moment could only feel that he had been robbed of Hetty—robbed treacherously by the man in whom he had trusted; and he stood close in front of Arthur, with fierce eyes glaring at him, with pale lips and clenched hands, the hard tones in which he had hitherto been constraining himself to express no more than a just indignation, giving way to a deep, agitated voice that seemed to shake him as he spoke.

“No, it’ll not be soon forgot, as you’ve come in between her and me, when she might ha’loved me—it’ll not soon be forgot, as you’ve robbed me o’ my happiness, while I thought you was<sup>16</sup> my best friend, and a noble-minded man, as I was proud to work for. And you’ve been kissing her, and meaning nothing, have you? And I never kissed her i’ my life, but I’d ha’ worked hard for years for the right to kiss her. And you make light of it. You think little o’ doing what may damage other folks, so as you get your bit o’ trifling, as means nothing. I throw back your favours, for you’re not the man I took you for. I’ll never count you my friend any more. I’d

rather you'd act as my enemy, and fight me where I stand—it's all th' amends you can make me."

Poor Adam, possessed by rage that could find no other vent, began to throw off his coat and his cap, too blind with passion to notice the change that had taken place in Arthur while he was speaking. Arthur's lips were now as pale as Adam's; his heart was beating violently. The discovery that Adam loved Hetty was a shock which made him for the moment see himself in the light of Adam's indignation, and regard Adam's suffering as not merely a consequence but an element<sup>10</sup> of his error. The words of hatred and contempt—the first he had ever heard in his life—seemed like scorching missiles that were making ineffaceable scars on him. All screening self-excuse, which rarely falls quite away while others respect us, forsook him for an instant, and he stood face to face with the first great irrevocable evil he had ever committed. He was only twenty-one—and three months ago—nay, much later—he had thought proudly that no man should ever be able to reproach him justly. His first impulse, if there had been time for it, would perhaps have been to utter words of propitiation; but Adam had no



sooner thrown off his coat and cap than he became aware that Arthur was standing pale and motionless, with his hands still thrust in his waistcoat pockets.

"What!" he said, "won't you fight me like a man? You know I won't strike you while you stand so."

"Go away, Adam," said Arthur, "I don't want to fight you."

"No," said Adam bitterly; "you don't want to fight me—you think I'm a common man, as you can injure without answering for it."

"I never meant to injure you," said Arthur, with returning anger. "I didn't know you loved her."

"But you've made her love *you*," said Adam. "You're a double-faced man—I'll never believe a word you say again."

"Go away, I tell you," said Arthur angrily, "or we shall both repent."

"No," said Adam, with a convulsed voice, "I swear I won't go away without fighting you. Do you want provoking any more? I tell you

you're a coward and a scoundrel, and I despise you."

The colour had all rushed back to Arthur's face: in a moment his white right hand was clenched, and dealt a blow like lightning, which sent Adam staggering backward. His blood was as thoroughly up as Adam's now, and the two men, forgetting the emotions that had gone before, fought with the instinctive fierceness of panthers in the deepening twilight darkened by the trees. The delicate-handed gentleman was a match for the workman in everything but strength, and Arthur's skill in parrying enabled him to protract the struggle for some long moments. But between unarmed men the battle is to the strong, where the strong is no blunderer, and Arthur must sink under a well-planted blow of Adam's, as a steel rod is broken by an iron bar. The blow soon came, and Arthur fell, his head lying concealed in a tuft of fern, so that Adam could only discern his darkly-clad body.

He stood still in the dim light waiting for Arthur to rise. The blow had been given now towards which he had been straining all the force

of nerve and muscle—and what was the good of it? What had he done by fighting? Only satisfied his own passion, only wreaked his own vengeance. He had not rescued Hetty, not changed the past—there it was just as it had been; and he sickened at the vanity of his own rage.

But why did not Arthur rise? He was perfectly motionless, and the time seemed long to Adam. . . . Good God! had the blow been too much for him? Adam shuddered at the thought of his own strength, as with the oncoming of this dread he knelt down by Arthur's side and lifted his head from among the fern. There was no sign of life: the eyes and teeth were set. The horror that rushed over Adam completely mastered him and forced upon him its own belief. He could feel nothing but that death was in Arthur's face, and that he was helpless before it. He made not a single movement, but knelt like an image of despair gazing at an image of death.

CHAPTER IV  
CHARLES READE  
(1814-1888)

[Charles Reade does not compare with the three literary giants of the Victorian age, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. He was a romanticist by nature *i.e.*, a writer who ignores the sordid elements in human life and believes in man's unlimited capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice. In this as well as in other respects he reminds us of Dickens, but he lacks that great master's creative genius for character and his saving grace of humour. Charles Reade is on the whole a heavy writer. The moral intention of many of his books is evident in their very titles, *e.g.*, "Put Yourself in His place". A Terrible Temptation", and "It is Never Too Late to Mend." The story he tells and the characters he presents are only secondary to his main purpose, which is to teach us a moral lesson.

Reade often selects some social problem of his day and weaves his plot around it. In, "It is

Never Too Late To Mend", from which our selections are taken, it is the question of Prison Reform which he tackles. In those days prisoners were treated with extreme severity in England and many barbarous practices were carried on under the protection of the law and with the connivance of the magistrates. Charles Reade not only describes these practices in a graphic manner so as to arouse the resentment of the reader against the inhuman discipline of the prison authorities, but he also attempts to show how a more kindly and sympathetic treatment could win over the wrongdoer from his evil ways, whereas cruelty would only make him more confirmed in his wickedness.

This group of Reade's novels are the forerunners of the sociological novels such as those of H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley in which the institutions of society are analysed through concrete examples, and the lines on which they should be reconstructed are indicated.

The romantic element in Reade finds an outlet in another type of novel, those in which he deals with the world of the theatre and the life of actors and actresses, such as "Peg Woffington". His



best book, however, is "The Cloister and the Hearth", a historical romance of the times of the Renaissance.

Charles Reade is a most conscientious writer and supports his views with a copious mass of evidence derived from real life. This slow accumulation of facts has an overwhelming effect on the reader. These extracts should interest the reader in the movement for prison reform in our own country.]

### ROBINSON GOES TO PRISON

The treatment of prisoners is not at present invariable. Within certain limits, the law unwisely allows a discretionary power to the magistrates of the county where the jail is; and the jailer or, as he is now called, the governor, is their agent in these particulars.

Hence, in some new jails you may now see the non-separate system,<sup>1</sup> in others, the separate system<sup>2</sup> without silence; in others, the separate and silent system,<sup>3</sup> in others, a mixture of these—*i.e.*, the hardened offenders kept separate, the improving ones allowed to mix; and these varieties

are at the discretion of the magistrates, who settle within the legal limits each jail's system.

The magistrates, in this part of their business, are represented by certain of their own body, who are called "the visiting justices"; and these visiting justices can even order and authorise a jailer to flog a prisoner for offences committed in jail.

Now, a year or two before our tale, one Captain O'Connor, was governor of this jail. Captain O'Connor, was a man of great public merit. He had been one of the first dissatisfied with the old system, and had written very intelligent books on crime and punishment, which are supposed to have done their share in opening the nation's eyes to the necessity of regenerating its prisons. But after a while the visiting justices of this particular county became dissatisfied with him; he did not go far enough nor fast enough with the stone he had helped to roll. Books and reports came out which convinced the magistrates that severe punishment of mind and body was the essential object of a jail, and that it was wrong and chimerical to attempt any cures by any other means.

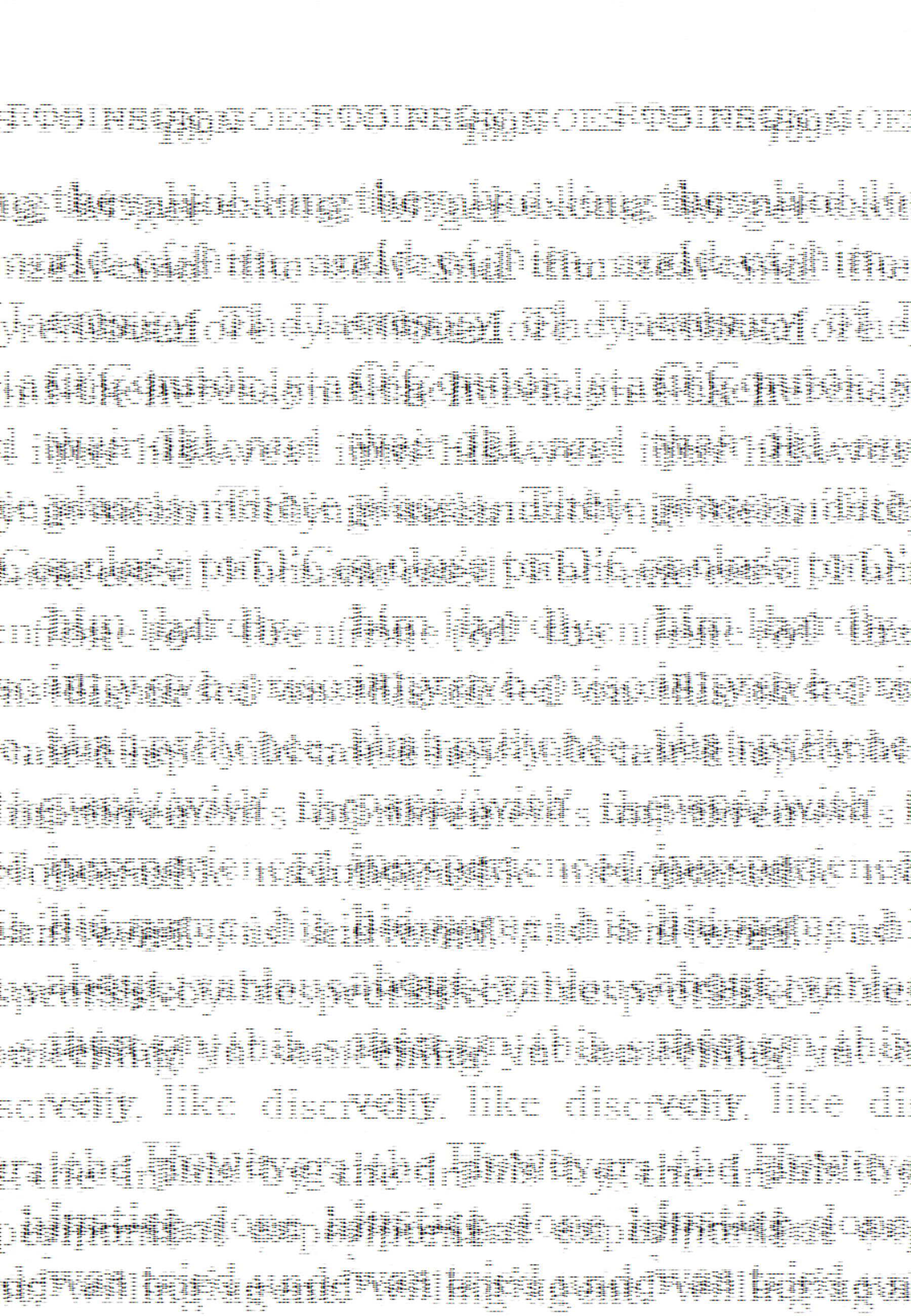
Captain O'Connor had been very successful by other means, and could not quite come to this

opinion; but he had a deputy-governor who did. System, when it takes a hold of the mind, takes a strong hold, and the men of system became very impatient of opposition, and grateful for thorough acquiescence<sup>6</sup>.

Hence it came to pass, that in the course of a few months, Captain O'Connor found himself in an uncomfortable position. His deputy-governor, Mr. Hawes, enjoyed the confidence of the visiting justices; he did not. His suggestions were negatived; Hawes's accepted. And to tell the truth, he became at last useless as well as uncomfortable, for these gentlemen were determined to carry out their system, and had a willing agent in the prison. O'Connor was little more than a drag on the wheel he could not hinder from gliding down the hill. At last, it happened that he had overdrawn his account, without clearly stating at the time that the sum, which amounted nearly to one hundred pounds, was taken by him as an accommodation, or advance of salary. This, which though by no means unprecedented, was an unbusiness-like, though innocent omission, justified censure.

The magistrates went further than censure;





During this period three justices had periodically visited the jail, perused the reports, examined, as in duty bound, the surgeon, the officers, and prisoners, and were proud of the system and its practical working here.

With respect to Hawes the governor, their opinion of him was best shown in the reports they had to make to the Home Office from time to time. In these they invariably spoke of him as an active, zealous and deserving officer.

Robinson had heard much of the changes in jail treatment, but they had not yet come home to him; when, therefore, instead of being turned adrift among seventy other spirits as bad as himself, and greeted with their boisterous acclamations, and the friendly pressure of seven or eight 'felonious hands,' he was ushered into a cell white as driven snow, and his housewifely duties explained to him, under a heavy penalty if a speck of dirt should ever be discovered on his little wall, his little floor, his little table, or if his cocoa-bark mattress should not be neatly rolled up after use, and the strap tight, and the steel hook polished like glass, and his little brass gas-pipe glittering



like gold, etc. Thomas looked blank and had a misgiving.

"I say, gov'nor," said he to the under turnkey, "how long am I to be here before I go into the yard?"

"Talking not allowed out of hours," was the only reply.

Robinson whistled. The turnkey, whose name was Evans, looked at him with a doubtful air, as much as to say, "Shall I let that pass unpunished or not?" However, he went out without any further observation, leaving the door open: but the next moment he returned and put his head in: "Prisoners shut their own doors," said he.

"Well," drawled Robinson, looking coolly and insolently into the man's face, "I don't see what I shall gain by that." And Mr. Robinson seated himself, and turning his back a little rudely, immersed himself ostentatiously in his own thoughts.

"You will gain as you won't be put in the black-hole for refractory conduct, No. 19," replied Evans, quietly and sternly.

Robinson made a wry face, and pushed the door peevishly: it shut with a spring, and no mortal power or ingenuity could now open it from the inside.

"Well, I'm blest," said the self-immured, "every man his own turnkey now; save the Queen's pocket," whatever you do. Times are so hard. Box at the opera costs no end. What have we got here? A Bible! my eyes! invisible print! Oh, I see; 't isn't for 'us to read; 'tis for the visitors to admire—like the new sheet over the dirty blankets! What's this hung up?

### GRACE AFTER MEAT

Oh, with all my heart, your reverence!" Here, turnkey, fetch up the venison and the sweet sauce—you may leave the water-gruel<sup>18</sup> until I ring for it. If I am to say grace, let me feel it first: dart your eyes all round, governor, turnkeys, chaplain, and all the hypocritical crew!"

The next morning, at half-past five, the prison bell rang for the officers to rise, and at six a turnkey unlocked Robinson's door, and delivered the following in an imperious key all in one note and without any rests: "Prisoner to open and shake

bedding wash face hands and neck on pain of punishment and roll up hammocks and clean cells and be ready to clean corridors if required." So chanting—slammed door—vanished.

Robinson set to work with alacrity upon the little arrangements; he soon finished them, and then he would not have been sorry to turn out and clean the corridor for a change, but it was not his turn. He sat, dull and lonely, till eight o'clock, when suddenly a key was inserted into a small lock in the centre of his door, but outside; the effect of this was to open a small trap in the door, through this aperture a turnkey shoved in the man's breakfast, without a word, "like one flinging guts to a bear" (Scott); and on the sociable Tom attempting to say a civil word to him, drew the trap sharply back, and hermetically sealed the aperture with a snap. The breakfast was in a round tin, with two compartments; one pint of gruel and six ounces of bread. These two phases of farina were familiar to Mr. Robinson. He ate the bread and drank the gruel, adding a good deal of salt.

At nine the chapel bell rang. Robinson was glad; not that he admired the Liturgy," but he

said to himself, "Now I shall see a face or two, perhaps some old pals."

To his dismay, the warder who opened his cell bade him at the same time put on the prison cap, with the peak down; and when he and the other male prisoners were mustered in the corridor, he found them all like himself, vizor down, eyes glittering like basilisks' or cats' through two holes, features undistinguishable. The word was given to march in perfect silence, five paces apart, to the chapel.

The sullen pageant started.

"I've heard of this, but who'd have thought they carried the game so far. Well, I must wait till we are in chapel, and pick up a pal by the voice, whilst the parson is doing his patter."

On reaching the chapel, he found to his dismay that the chapel was as cellular as any other part of the prison; it was an agglomeration of one hundred sentry-boxes, open only on the side facing the clergyman, and even there only from the prisoner's third button upwards. Warders stood on raised platforms, and pointed out his sentry-box to each prisoner with very long slender wands;

the prisoner went into it and pulled the door (it shut with a spring), and next took his badge or number from his neck, and hung it up on a nail above his head in the sentry-box. Between the reading-desk and the male prisoners was a small area where the debtors sat together.

The female prisoners were behind a thick veil of close lattice-work.

Service concluded, the governor began to turn a wheel in his pew: this wheel exhibited to the congregation a number, the convict whose number corresponded instantly took down his badge (the sight and position of which had determined the governor in working his wheel), drew the peak of his cap over his face and went out and waited in the lobby. When all the sentry-boxes were thus emptied, dead march of the whole party back to the main building; here the warders separated them, and sent them dead silent, vizors down, some to clean the prison, some to their cells, some to hard labour, and some to an airing in the yard.

Robinson was to be aired. "Hurrah!" thought sociable Tom. Alas! he found the system



in the yard as well as in the chapel. The promenade was a number of passages radiating from a common centre; the sides of the passage were thick walls; entrance to passage an iron gate locked behind the promenader. An officer remained on the watch the whole time to see that a word did not creep out or in through one of the gates.

"And this they call out of doors," grunted Robinson.

After an hour's promenade he was taken into his cell, where, at twelve, the trap in his door was opened and his dinner shoved in, and the trap snapped-to again all in three seconds. A very good dinner, better than paupers always get—three ounces of meat (no bone), eight ounces of potatoes, and eight ounces of bread. After dinner, three weary hours without an incident. At about three o'clock one of the warders opened his cell door, and put his head in and swiftly withdrew it. Three more monotonous hours, and then supper—one pint of gruel, and eight ounces of bread. He ate it as slowly as he could to eke out a few minutes in the heavy day. Quarter before eight a bell to go to bed. At eight the warders came round, and saw that the prisoners were all in bed.

The next day the same thing, and the next ditto, with this exception, that one of the warders came into his cell and minutely examined it in dead silence. The fourth day the chaplain visited him, asked him a few questions, repeated a few sentences on the moral responsibility of every human being, and set him some texts of Scripture to learn by heart. This visit, though merely one of routine, broke the thief's dead silence and solitude, and he would have been thankful to have a visit every day from the chaplain, whose manner was formal, but not surly and forbidding like the turnkeys or warders.

Next day the governor of the jail came suddenly into the cell, and put to Robinson several questions, which he answered with great affability; then, turning on his heel, said brusquely, "Have you anything to say to me?"

"Yes, sir, if you please."

"Out with it then, my man," said the governor impatiently.

"Sir, I was condemned to hard labour; now I wanted to ask you when my hard labour is to begin, because I have not been put upon anything yet."

"We are kinder to you than the judges, then, it seems."

"Yes, sir; but I am not naturally lazy, and—"

"A little hard work would amuse you just now?"

"Indeed, sir, I think it would; I am very much depressed in spirits."

"You will be worse before you are better."

"Heaven forbid! I think if you don't give me something to do I shall go out of my mind soon, sir."

"That is what they all say. You will be put on hard labour, I promise you, but not when it suits you. We'll choose the time." And the governor went out with a knowing smile upon his face.

The thief sat himself down disconsolately, and the heavy hours, like leaden waves, seemed to rise and rise, and roll over his head and suffocate him, and weigh him down, down, down to bottomless despair.

At length, about the tenth day, this human being's desire to exchange a friendly word with some other human creature became so strong,

that in the chapel, during service, he scratched the door of his sentry-box, and whispered, "Mate, whisper me a word, for pity's sake." He received no answer; but even to have spoken himself relieved his swelling soul for a minute or two. Half an hour later four turnkeys came into his cell, and took him downstairs, and confined him in a pitch-dark dungeon.

The prisoner whose attention he had tried to attract in chapel had told to curry favour, and was reported favourably for the same.

The darkness in which Robinson now lay was not like the darkness of our bedrooms at night, in which the outlines of objects are more or less visible; it was the frightful darkness that chilled and crushed the Egyptians,<sup>10</sup> soul and body—it was a darkness that might be felt.

This terrible and unnatural privation of all light is very trying to all God's creatures, to none more so than to man, and amongst men it is most dangerous and distressing to those who have imagination and excitability. Now Robinson was a man of this class, a man of rare capacity, full of talent and the courage and energy that vent

themselves in action, but not rich in the tough fortitude which does little, feels little, and bears much.

When they took him out of the black-hole, after six hours' confinement, he was observed to be white as a sheet, and to tremble violently all over, and in this state, at the word of command he crept back all the way to his cell, his hand to his eyes, that were dazzled by what seemed to him bright daylight, his body shaking, while every now and then a loud convulsive sob burst from his bosom.

The governor happened to be on the corridor, looking down over the rails, as Robinson passed him. He said to him, with a victorious sneer, "You won't be refractory in chapel again in a hurry."

"No," said the thief, in a low, gentle voice, despairingly.

The day after Robinson was put in the black-hole the surgeon came his rounds: he found him in a corner of his cell with his eyes fixed on the floor.



The man took no notice of his entrance. The surgeon went up to him, and shook him rather roughly. Robinson raised his heavy eyes, and looked stupidly at him.

The surgeon laid hold of him, and placing a thumb on each side of his eye, inspected that organ fully. He then felt his pulse; this done, he went out with the warder. Making his report to the governor, he came in turn to Robinson.

"No. 19 is sinking."

"Oh, is he?—Fry" (turning to a warder), "what has 19's treatment been?"

"Been in his cell, sir, without labour since he came. Black-hole yesterday, for communicating in chapel."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Doctor says he is sinking."

"What the devil do you mean by his sinking?"

"Well, sir," replied the surgeon, with a sort of dry deference, "he is dying—that is what I mean."

"Oh, he is dying, is he; d—n him, we'll stop that! Here, Fry, take No. 19 out into the garden and set him to work, and put him on the corridors to-morrow."

"Is he to be let talk to us, sir?"

"Humph! yes!"

Robinson was taken out into the garden; it was a small piece of ground that had once been a yard; it was inclosed within walls of great height, and to us would have seemed a cheerless place for horticulture, but to Robinson it appeared the garden of Eden: he gave a sigh of relief and pleasure, but the next moment his countenance fell.

"They won't let me stay here!"

Fry took him into the centre of the garden, and put a spade into his hand. "Now you dig this piece," said he, in his dry, unfriendly tone, "and if you have time cut the edges of this grass path square." The words were scarcely out of his mouth, before Robinson drove the spade into the soil with all the energy of one of God's creatures escaping from system back to nature.

### GOVERNOR HAWES' SYSTEM

The next morning Fry the morose came into Robinson's cell with a more cheerful countenance than usual. Robinson noticed it.

"You are put on the crank," said Fry.

"Oh, am I?"

"Of course you are. Your sentence was hard labour, wasn't it? I don't know why you weren't sent on a fortnight ago."

Fry then took him out into the labour-yard, which he found perforated with cells about half the size of his hermitage in the corridor. In each of these little quiet grottos<sup>3</sup> lurked a monster called a crank. A crank is a machine of this sort—there springs out of a vertical post an iron handle, which the workman, taking it by both hands, works round and round as in some country places you may have seen the villagers draw a bucket up from a well. The iron handle goes at the shoulder into a small iron box at the top of the post, and inside that box the resistance to the turner is regulated by the manufacturer, who states the value of the resistance outside in cast-iron letters. Thus—

5-lb. crank.

7-lb. crank, 10, 12, etc., etc.

"Eighteen hundred revolutions per hour," said Mr. Fry in his voice of routine, "and you are to work two hours before dinner." So saying,

he left him, and Robinson, with the fear of punishment before him, lost not a moment in getting to work. He found the crank go easy enough at first, but the longer he was at it the stiffer it seemed to turn. And after about four hundred turns he was fain to breathe and rest himself. He took three minutes rest, then at it again. All this time there was no taskmaster, as in Egypt, nor whipperup of declining sable energy, as in Old Kentucky.' So that if I am so fortunate as to have a reader aged ten, he is wondering why the fool did not confine his exertions to *saying* he had made the turns. My dear, it would not do. Though no mortal oversaw the thief at his task, the eye of science was in that cell and watched every stroke, and her inexorable finger marked it down. In plain English, on the face of the machine was a thing like a chronometer with numbers set all round, and a hand which, somehow or other, always pointed to the exact number of turns the thief had made. The crank was an autometer, or self-measurer, and in that respect your superior and mine, my little drake.'

This was Robinson's first acquaintance with the crank. The tread-wheel<sup>o</sup> had been the mode

in his time; so by the time he had made three thousand turns he was rather exhausted. He leaned upon the iron handle, and sadly regretted his garden and his brushes; but fear and dire necessity were upon him; he set to his task and to work again. "I won't look at the meter again, for it always tells me less than I expect. I'll just plough on till that beggar comes. I know he will come to the minute.

Sadly and doggedly he turned the iron handle, and turned and turned again; and then he panted and rested a minute, and then doggedly to his idle toil again. He was now so fatigued that his head seemed to have come loose, he could not hold it up, and it went round and round and round with the crank-handle. Hence it was that Mr. Fry stood at the mouth of the den without the other seeing him. "Halt," said Fry. Robinson looked up, and there was the turnkey inspecting him with a discontented air. "I'm done," thought Robinson, "here he is as black as thunder—the number not right no doubt".

"What are ye at?" growled Fry. "You are forty over," and the said Fry looked not only ill-used, but a little unhappy. Robinson's good



behaviour had disappointed the poor soul.

This Fry was a grim oddity; he experienced a feeble complacency when things went wrong—but never else.

The thief exulted, and was taken back to his cell. Dinner came almost immediately; four ounces of meat instead of three, two ounces less bread, but a large access of potatoes, which more than balanced the account.

The next day Robinson was put on the crank again, but not till the afternoon. He had finished about half his task when he heard at some little distance from him a faint moaning. His first impulse was to run out of his cell and see what was the matter, but Hodges' and Fry were both in the yard, and he knew that they would report him for punishment upon the least breach of discipline. So he turned and turned the crank, with these moans ringing in his ears and perplexing his soul.

Finding that they did not cease, he peeped cautiously into the yard, and there he saw the governor himself as well as Hodges and Fry; all three were standing close to the place whence

these groans issued, and with an air of complete unconcern.

But presently the groans ceased, and then mysteriously enough the little group of disciplinarians threw off their apathy. Hodges and Fry went hastily to the pump with buckets, which they filled, and then came back to the governor; the next minute Robinson heard water dashed repeatedly against the walls of the cell, and then the governor laughed, and Hodges laughed, and even the gloomy Fry vented a brief grim chuckle.

And now Robinson quivered with curiosity as he turned his crank, but there was no means of gratifying it. It so happened, however, that some ten minutes later the governor sent Hodges and Fry to another part of the prison, and they had not been gone long before a message came to himself, on which he went hastily out, and the yard was left empty. Robinson's curiosity had reached such a pitch, that notwithstanding the risk he ran, for he knew the governor would send back to the yard the very first disengaged officer he met, he could not stay quiet. As the governor closed the gate he ran with all speed to the cell,

he darted in, and then the thief saw what made the three honest men laugh so. He saw it, and started back with a cry of dismay, for the sight chilled the felon to the bone.

A lad about fifteen years of age was pinned against the wall in agony by a leathern belt passed round his shoulders and drawn violently round two staples<sup>8</sup> in the wall. His arms were jammed against his sides by a strait waistcoat<sup>9</sup> fastened with straps behind, and those straps drawn with the utmost severity. But this was not all. A high leathern collar, a quarter of an inch thick, squeezed his throat in its iron grasp. His hair and his clothes were drenched with water, which had been thrown in bucketfuls over him, and now dripped from him on the floor. His face was white, his lips livid, his eyes were nearly glazed, and his teeth chattered with cold and pain.

A more unprincipled man than Robinson did not exist; but burglary and larceny do not extinguish humanity in a thinking rascal, as resigning the soul to system can extinguish it in a dull dog.

"Oh, what is this?" cried Robinson "what are the villains doing to you?"

He received no answer; but the boy's eyes opened wide, and he turned those glazing eyes, the only part of his body he could turn, towards the speaker. Robinson ran up to him and began to try and loosen him.

At this the boy cried out, almost screaming with terror, "Let me alone! let me alone! they'll give it me worse if you do, and they'll serve you out too."

"But you will die, boy. Look at his poor lips!"

"No, no, no! I shan't die! No such luck!" cried the boy, impatiently and wildly. "Thank you for speaking kind to me. Who are you? tell me quick and go. I am Josephs, No. 15 Corridor A."

"I am Robinson, No. 19, Corridor B."

"Good-bye, Robinson; I shan't forget you. Hark, the door! Go! go! go! go! go!"

Robinson was already gone. He had fled at the first click of a key in the outward door, and darted into his cell at the moment Fry got into the yard. An instinct of suspicion led this man straight to Robinson's hermitage.<sup>10</sup> He found

him hard at work. Fry scrutinised his countenance, but Robinson was too good an actor to betray himself; only when Fry passed on he drew a long breath. What he had seen surprised as well as alarmed him, for he had always been told the new system discouraged personal violence of all sorts; and in all his experience of the old jails he had never seen a prisoner abused so savagely as the young martyr in the adjoining cell. His own work done, he left for his own dormitory. He was uneasy, and his heart was heavy for poor Josephs, but he dared not even cast a look towards his place of torture, for the other executioners had returned, and Fry followed grim at his heels like a mastiff<sup>11</sup> dogging a stranger out of the premises.

That evening Robinson spent in gloomy reflections and forebodings. "I wish I was in the hulks,"<sup>12</sup> or anywhere out of this place," said he. As for Josephs, the governor, after inspecting his torture, for a few minutes, left the yard again with his subordinates, and Josephs was left alone with his great torture for two hours more; then Hodges came in, and began to loose him, swearing at



him all the time for a little rebellious monkey that gave more trouble than enough. The rebellious monkey made no answer, but crawled slowly away to his dungeon, shivering in his drenched clothes, stiff and sore, his bones full of pain, his heart full of despondency.

Robinson had now eight thousand turns of the crank per day, and very hard work he found it; but he preferred it to being buried alive all day in his cell: and warned by Josephs' fate, he went at the crank with all his soul, and never gave them an excuse for calling him "refractory." It happened, however, one day just after breakfast, that he was taken with a headache and shivering; and not getting better after chapel, but rather worse, he rang his bell and begged to see the surgeon. The surgeon ought to have been in the jail at this hour: he was not, though, and as he had been the day before, and was accustomed to neglect the prisoners for anyone who paid better, he was not expected this day. Soon after Fry came to the cell and ordered Robinson out to the crank. Robinson told him he was too ill to work.

"I must have the surgeon's authority for

that, before I listen to it", replied Fry, amateur of routine.

"But he is not in the jail, or you would have it."

"Then he ought to be."

"Well, is it my fault he's shirking his duty? Send for him, and you'll see he will tell you I am not fit for the crank to-day; my head is splitting."

"Come, no gammon," No. 19; it is the crank or the jacket, or else the black-hole. So take which you like best."

Robinson rose with a groan of pain and despondency.

"It is only eight thousand words" you have got to say to it; and that is not many for such a tongue as yours."

At the end of the time Fry came to the mouth of the labour-cell with a grim chuckle: "He will never have done his number this time." He found Robinson kneeling on the ground, almost insensible, the crank-handle convulsively grasped in his hands. Fry's first glance was at this figure, that a painter might have taken for a picture, of labour overtasked, but this was neither new nor

interesting to Fry. He went eagerly to examine the meter of the crank—there lay his heart, such as it was—and to his sorrow he found that No. 19 had done his work before he broke down. What it cost the poor fever-stricken wretch to do it can easier be imagined than described.

They assisted Robinson to his cell, and that night he was in a burning fever. The next day the surgeon happened by some accident to be at his post, and prescribed change of diet and medicines for him. "He would be better in the infirmary.<sup>15</sup>"

"Why?" said the governor.

"More air."

"Nonsense, there is plenty of air here; there is a constant stream of air comes in through this," and he pointed to a revolving cylinder in the window constructed for that purpose. "You give him the right stuff, doctor," said Hawes jocosely, "and he won't slip his wind this" time."

The surgeon acquiesced, according to custom.

It was not for him to contradict Hawes, who allowed him to attend the jail or neglect it according to his convenience, *i.e.*, to come three or four

times a week at different hours, instead of twice every day at fixed hours.

It was two days after this that the governor saw Hodges come out of a cell, laughing.

"What are ye grinning at?" said he in his amiable<sup>17</sup> way.

"No. 19 is light-headed,"<sup>18</sup> sir, and I have been listening to him. It would make a cat laugh," said Hodges apologetically. He knew well enough the governor did not approve of laughing in the jail.

The governor said nothing, but made a motion with his hand, and Hodges opened cell 19, and they both went in.

No. 19 lay on his back, flushed and restless, with his eyes fixed on vacancy. He was talking incessantly and without sequence. I should fail signally were I to attempt to transfer his words to paper. I feel my weakness, and the strength of others who in my day have shown a singular power of fixing on paper the volatile particles of frenzy.<sup>19</sup> However, in a word, the poor thief was

talking as our poetasters write, and amidst his gunpowder, daffodils, bosh, and other constellations, there mingled gleams of sense and feeling that would have made you and me very sad.

He often recurred to a girl he called Mary, and said a few gentle words to her; then off again into the wildest flights. While Mr. Hawes and his myrmidons<sup>30</sup> were laughing at him, he suddenly fixed his eyes on some imaginary figure on the opposite wall, and began to cry out loudly, "Take him down. Don't you see you are killing him? The collar is choking him! See how white he is! His eyes stare! The boy will die! Murder, murder, murder! I can't bear to see him die." And with these words he buried his head in the bed-clothes.

Mr. Hawes looked at Mr. Fry; Mr. Fry answered the look. "He must have seen Josephs the other day."

"Ay! he is mighty curious. Well, when he gets well!" and, shaking his fist at the sufferer, Mr. Hawes went out of the cell soon after.



CHAPTER V  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
(1850-1894)

[Robert Louis Stevenson was the son of a Scotch engineer. Following in the footsteps of his father he began to study engineering but soon abandoned it and took up the study of law. He was called to the bar in 1875, but here also he found himself a misfit. His real interest lay in literature and it was there that he was destined to make his mark. Like so many other writers of the nineteenth century he began by writing essays and stories for various magazines, many of which were later collected into book forms. He was a versatile genius, and his literary adventures embraced essays, fiction, fairy tales, character sketches, travel, letter-writing, poetry and drama. Among the many books that he wrote the following are worthy of mention: *Treasure Island*, *Virginibus Puerisque*, *Familiar Studies of Men and Women*, *New Arabian Nights*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Kidnapped with*

its sequel *Catriona*, *The Black Arrow*, *St. Ives* and *Weir of Hermiston*, which was finished after his death by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch. He also wrote very remarkable verse which appeared under the titles of "*A Child's Garden of Verses*" and "*Underwoods*". He collaborated with Mr. W. E. Henley in writing a number of plays such as "*Deacon Brodie*", "*Beau Austin*", and "*Admiral Guinea*". His letters, *vis.*, "*Vailima Letters*" and "*Letters of R. L. Stevenson*", edited by Sir Sidney Colvin, make very delightful reading.

Stevenson was a strangely lovable genius, who combined a boyish love of adventure and romance with the mature wisdom of a sage. His writings represent a strong reaction against the dullness and deadness of modern civilization. In his opinion we are so much preoccupied with the false values of life that we have become insensitive to the beauty and romance that lie hidden in the ordinary things of the world. In the words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "*If Thackeray is our youth, Stevenson is our boyhood.*"

Stevenson was a semi-invalid all his life, a victim of that fell disease, consumption. But he

never allowed it to dull his spirits, and was in fact a most delightful and witty companion who was loved by his friends for his sunny nature, as he is admired by millions of his readers for his robust courage in the great adventure of life.

In 1879 he went on an adventurous journey to the wild west of America and nearly died there. But in a year's time he recovered his health and his zest for life. In 1880 he married Mrs. Osborne in California, who looked after him with unflinching devotion for the rest of his life.

In 1888 Stevenson set out for the South Seas in search of health and settled in the Island of Samoa. Here he bought the 'Vailima' property and led a quiet life, cut off from the noise and hustle of modern civilisation. He died all of a sudden in 1894 and was buried on a hill near his house.

Stevenson's style is remarkable for its strange finish and beauty. While still young he used to "act the 'sedulous ape'" to authors like Lamb and Hazlitt, but the style that he developed was all his own. It has a keen edge which bites into our senses, and the clarity of his diction, and the quaint

flavour of his humour make him a delightful author to read. This flowing and natural style, which seems so effortless to the reader, was not achieved without hard labour. As he himself has told us in his Vailima letters he weighed his words and phrases with as much care as an architect makes sure about the size and shape of his stones.]

### THE DONKEY, THE PACK, AND THE PACK-SADDLE

In a little place called Le Monastier, in a pleasant highland valley fifteen miles from Le Puy, I spent about a month of fine days. Monastier is notable for the making of lace, for drunkenness, for freedom of language, and for unparalleled political dissension. There are adherents of each of the four French parties—Legitimists, Orleanists, Imperialists, and Republicans<sup>1</sup>—in this little mountain-town; and they all hate, loathe, decry, and caluminate each other. Except for business purposes, or to give each other the lie in a tavern brawl, they have laid aside even the civility of speech. 'Tis a mere mountain Poland'. In the midst of this Babylon<sup>2</sup> I found myself a rallying-point; every one was anxious to be kind and help-

ful to the stranger. This was not merely from the natural hospitality of mountain people, nor even from the surprise with which I was regarded as a man living of his own free will in Le Monastier, when he might just as well have lived anywhere else in this big world; it arose a good deal from my projected excursion southward through the Cevennes.' A traveller of my sort was a thing hitherto unheard of in that district. I was looked upon with contempt, like a man who should project a journey to the moon, but yet with a respectful interest, like one setting forth for the inclement Pole. All were ready to help in my preparations; a crowd of sympathisers supported me at the critical moment of a bargain; not a step was taken but was heralded by glasses round and celebrated by a dinner or a breakfast.

It was already hard upon October before I was ready to set forth, and at the high altitudes over which my road lay there was no Indian summer<sup>6</sup> to be looked for. I was determined, if not to camp out, at least to have the means of camping out in my possession; for there is nothing more harassing to an easy mind than the necessity of reaching shelter by dusk, and the hospitality of a



village inn is not always to be reckoned sure by those who trudge on foot. A tent, above all for a solitary traveller, is troublesome to pitch, and troublesome to strike again; and even on the march it forms a conspicuous feature in your baggage. A sleeping-sack, on the other hand, is always ready—you have only to get into it; it serves a double purpose—a bed by night, a portmanteau by day; and it does not advertise your intention of camping out to every curious passer-by. This is a huge point. If the camp is not secret, it is but a troubled resting-place; you become a public character; the convivial rustic visits your bedside after an early supper; and you must sleep with one eye open, and be up before the day. I decided on a sleeping-sack; and after repeated visits to Le Puy, and a deal of high living for myself and my advisers, a sleeping-sack was designed, constructed, and triumphantly brought home.

This child of my invention was nearly six feet square, exclusive of two triangular flaps to serve as a pillow by night and as the top and bottom of the sack by day. I call it "the sack," but it was never a sack by more than courtesy; only a sort of long roll or sausage, green waterproof cart cloth

without and blue sheep's fur within. It was commodious as a valise,<sup>o</sup> warm and dry for a bed. There was luxurious turning room for one; and at a pinch<sup>7</sup> the thing might serve for two. I could bury myself in it up to the neck; for my head I trusted to a fur cap, with a hood to fold down over my ears and a band to pass under my nose like a respirator; and in case of heavy rain I proposed to make myself a little tent, or tentlet, with my waterproof coat, three stones, and a bent branch.

It will readily be conceived that I could not carry this huge package on my own, merely human, shoulders. It remained to choose a beast of burden. Now, a horse is a fine lady among animals, flighty, timid, delicate in eating, of tender health; he is too valuable and too restive to be left alone, so that you are chained to your brute as to a fellow galley-slave;<sup>8</sup> a dangerous road puts him out of his wits; in short, he's an uncertain and exacting ally, and adds thirtyfold to the troubles of the voyager. What I required was something cheap and small and hardy, and of a stolid and peaceful temper; and all these requisites pointed to a donkey.

There dwelt an old man in Monastier, of rather unsound intellect according to some, much followed by street boys, and known to fame as Father Adam. Father Adam had a cart, and to draw the cart a diminutive she-ass, not much bigger than a dog, the colour of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under-jaw. There was something neat and high-bred, a quakerish elegance, about the rogue that hit my fancy on the spot. Our first interview was in Monastier market-place. To prove her good temper, one child after another was set upon her back to ride, and one after another went head over heels into the air; until a want of confidence began to reign in youthful bosoms, and the experiment was discontinued from a dearth of subjects. I was already backed by a deputation of my friends; but as if this were not enough, all the buyers and sellers came round and helped me in the bargain; and the ass and I and Father Adam were the centre of a hubbub for near half an hour. At length she passed into my service for the consideration of sixty-five francs and a glass of brandy. The sack had already cost eighty francs and two glasses of beer; so that Modestine, as I instantly baptised

her, was upon all accounts the cheaper article. Indeed, that was as it should be; for she was only an appurtenance<sup>10</sup> of my mattress, or self-acting bedstead on four castors.<sup>11</sup>

I had a last interview with Father Adam in a billiard-room at the witching hour of dawn, when I administered the brandy. He professed himself greatly touched by the separation, and declared he had often bought white bread for the donkey when he had been content with black bread for himself; but this, according to the best authorities, must have been a flight of fancy. He had a name in the village for brutally misusing the ass; yet it is certain that he shed a tear and the tear made a clean mark down one cheek.

By the advice of a fallacious local saddler, a leather pad was made for me with rings to fasten on my bundle; and I thoughtfully completed my kit and arranged my toilette. By way of armoury and utensils, I took a revolver, a little spirit-lamp and pan, a lantern and some halfpenny candles, a jack-knife and a large leather flask. The main cargo consisted of two entire changes of warm clothing—besides my travelling wear of country velveteen, pilot-coat, and knitted spencer<sup>12</sup>—some



books, and my railway-rug, which, being also in the form of a bag, made me a double castle<sup>13</sup> for cold nights. The permanent larder was represented by cakes of chocolate and tins of Bologna sausage. All this, except what I carried about my person, was easily stowed into the sheepskin bag; and by good fortune I threw in my empty knapsack, rather for convenience of carriage than from any thought that I should want it on my journey. For more immediate needs, I took a leg of cold mutton, a bottle of beaujolais<sup>14</sup>, an empty bottle to carry milk, an egg-beater, and a considerable quantity of black bread and white, like Father Adam, for myself and donkey, only in my scheme of things the destinations were reversed.

Monastrians, of all shades of thought in politics, had agreed in threatening me with many ludicrous misadventures, and with sudden death in many surprising forms. Cold, wolves, robbers, above all the nocturnal practical joker, were daily and eloquently forced on my attention. Yet in these vaticinations,<sup>15</sup> the true, patent danger was left out. Like Christian,<sup>16</sup> it was from my pack I suffered by the way. Before telling my own mishaps, let me, in two words, relate the lesson of my



experience. If the pack is well strapped at the ends, and hung at full length—not doubled, for your life—across the pack-saddle, the traveller is safe. The saddle will certainly not fit, such is the imperfection of our transitory life; it will assuredly topple and tend to overset; but there are stones on every roadside, and a man soon learns the arts of correcting any tendency to over-balance with a well-adjusted stone.

On the day of my departure I was up a little after five; by six, we began to load the donkey; and ten minutes after, my hopes were in the dust. The pad would not stay on Modestine's back for half a moment. I returned it to its maker, with whom I had so contumelious a passage<sup>17</sup> that the street outside was crowded from wall to wall with gossips looking on and listening. The pad changed hands with much vivacity; perhaps it would be more descriptive to say that we threw it at each other's heads; and, any rate, we were very warm and unfriendly, and spoke with a good deal of freedom.

I had a common donkey pack-saddle—a *barde*, as they call it—fitted upon Modestine; and once more loaded her with my effects. The doubl-

ed sack, my pilot-coat (for it was warm, and I was to walk in my waistcoat), a great bar of black bread, and an open basket containing the white bread, the mutton, and the bottles, were all corded together in a very elaborate system of knots, and I looked on the result with fatuous content. In such a monstrous deck-cargo, all poised above the donkey's shoulders, with nothing below to balance, on a brand-new pack-saddle that had not yet been worn to fit the animal, and fastened with brand-new girths that might be expected to stretch and slacken by the way, even a very careless traveller should have seen disaster brewing. That elaborate system of knots, again, was the work of too many sympathisers to be very artfully designed. It is true they tightened the cords with a will; as many as three at a time would have a foot against Modestine's quarters, and be hauling with clenched teeth; but I learned afterwards that one thoughtful person, without any exercise of force, can make a more solid job than half a dozen heated and enthusiastic grooms. I was then but a novice; even after the misadventure of the pad nothing could disturb my security, and I went forth from the stable-door as an ox goeth to the slaughter.

## A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

From Bleymard after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the Lozere. An ill-marked stony drove-road<sup>1</sup> guided me forward; and I met nearly half a dozen bullock-carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little sprout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap. "In a more sacred or sequestered bower—nor nymph nor faunus haunted."<sup>2</sup> The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade; there was no outlook, except north-eastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down, I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same hour to life? Do the stars rain down an influence,\* or do we share some thrill of mother



earth below our resting bodies? Even shepherds and old countryfolk, who are the deepest read in these arcana,<sup>4</sup> have not a guess as to the means or purpose of this nightly resurrection. Towards two in the morning they declare the thing takes place; and neither know nor inquire further. And at least it is a pleasant incident. We are disturbed in our slumber, only, like the luxurious Montaigne,<sup>5</sup> "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look upon the stars, and there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse with all outdoor creatures in our neighbourhood, that we have escaped out of the Bastille of civilisation,<sup>6</sup> and are become, for the time being a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.

When that hour came to me among the pines, I wakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersions,<sup>7</sup> sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, coloured, and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapour stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack-



saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward; but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel<sup>s</sup> over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the colour of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a reddish gray behind the pines to where it showed a glossy blueblack between the stars. As if to be more like a pedlar, I wore a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at Chasseradis and the congregated nightcaps; with horror of the nocturnal prowess of clerks and students, of hot theatres and pass-keys<sup>r</sup> and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we cower into our houses,

seemed after all a gentle habitable place; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists; at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the highroad in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of goodwill than grace in his performance; but he trolled with ample lungs;<sup>10</sup> and the sound of his

voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities; some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double; first, this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again (Sunday, 29th September) many of the stars had disappeared, only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. I lit my lantern, and by its glowworm light put on my boots and gaiters; then I broke up some bread for

Modestine, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spiritlamp to boil myself some chocolate. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected; but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light, and that, indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

I drank my water-chocolate, which was hot if it was not rich, and strolled here and there, and up and down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing. The trees near at hand tossed their black plumes in its passage and I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes after, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside,



scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravan-serai. The room was airy, the water was excellent, and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the views which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and churlish drover.



## CHAPTER VI

### HILAIRE BELLOC

(1870- )

[Hilaire Belloc is one of the leading writers of modern times. He is the son of a French father and English mother but was educated at Balliol College, Oxford. He has made his mark in different forms of literature, such as essays, novels, travel, history, biography, verse and criticism. His best known work is "The Path to Rome", which is a description of the strange adventures of a tramp through France, Switzerland and Italy. Among his novels "The Girondins", "The Green Overcoat" and "Mr. Clutterbuck's Election" are remarkable. He is a very delightful writer of light verse and those who have read his "Hills and the Sea", "The Bad Child's Book of Beasts", and "More Beasts for Worse Children" will bear testimony to his grasp of the English language and his powers of entertainment. "The Four Men" is an account of a fantastic journey, while "Mary

Antoinette" is a biographical sketch showing great historical imagination.

His greatest fame, however, rests on his ability as a critic of his age. He is an ardent Roman Catholic, and believes that all the misfortunes of England were due to the Reformation. This is his bond with Mr. G. K. Chesterton, another great modern writer, with whom he has often collaborated. Belloc's criticism, nevertheless, is neither bigoted nor onesided. His sympathies are co-extensive with the interests of his complex times and his criticism of them is often just and thought-provoking. His view is that we are surrounded by powers of light as well as darkness, both of which have to be harnessed by a controlling intelligence to man's welfare. His essays, which contain his views on different aspects of modern society, make very interesting reading. Among them the following are worthy of mention:—"On Something", "On Everything" and "On Nothing".]

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

The nation known to history as the *Nephalo Ceclumenazenoï*, or, more shortly, the *Nepioï*, in-

habited a fruitful and prosperous district consisting in a portion of the mainland and certain islands situated in the Picrocholian Sea; and had there, for countless centuries enjoyed a particular form of government which it is not difficult to describe, for it was religious and arranged upon the principle that no ancient custom might be changed.

Lest such changes should come about through the lapse of time or the evil passions of men, the citizens of the aforesaid nation had them very clearly engraved in a dead language and upon bronze tablets, which they fixed upon the doors of their principal temple, where it stood upon a hill outside the city, and it was their laudable custom to entrust the interpretation of them not to aged judges, but to little children, for they argued that we increase in wickedness with years, and that no one is safe from the aged, but that children are, alone of the articulately speaking race,<sup>2</sup> truth-tellers. Therefore, upon the first day of the year (which falls in that country at the time of sowing) they would take one hundred boys of ten years of age chosen by lot, they would make these hundred, who had previously for one year received instruction in their sacred language, write each a trans-

lation of the simple code engraved upon the bronze tablets. It was invariably discovered that these artless<sup>a</sup> compositions varied only according to the ability of the lads to construe<sup>b</sup>, and that some considerable proportion of them did accurately show forth in the vernacular of the time the meaning of those ancestral laws. They had further a magistrate known as the Archon, whose business it was to administrate these customs and to punish those who broke them. And this Arhcon, when or if he proposed something contrary to custom in the opinion of not less than a hundred petitioners, was judged by a court of children.

In this fashion for thousands of years did the Nepioi proceed with their calm and ordinary lives, enjoying themselves like so many grigs,<sup>c</sup> and utterly untroubled by those broils and imaginations of State which disturbed their neighbours.

There was a legend among them (upon which the whole of this Constitution was based) that a certain Hero, one Melek, being in stature twelve foot high and no less than 93 inches round the chest, had landed in their country 150,000 years previously, and finding them very barbarous, slaying one another and unacquainted with the use of



letters, the precious metals, or the art of usury, had instructed them in civilization, endowed them with letters, a coinage, police, lawyers, instruments of torture, and all the other requisites of a great State, and had finally drawn up for them this code of law or custom, which they carefully preserved, engraved upon the tablets of bronze, which were set upon the walls of their chief temple on the hill outside the city.

Within the temple itself its great shrine and, so to speak, its very cause of being was the Hero's tomb. He lay therein covered with plates of gold, and it was confidently asserted and strictly and unquestionably believed that at some unknown time in the future he would come out to rule them for ever in a millennial fashion though heaven knows they were happy enough as it was.

Among their customs was this: that certain appointed officers would at every change in the moon proclaim the former existence and virtue of Melek, his residence in the tomb, and his claims to authority. To enter the tomb, indeed, was death, but there was proof of the whole story in documents which were carefully preserved in the temple, and which were from time to time con-



sulted and verified. The whole structure of Nepioian society reposed upon the sanctity of this story, upon the presence of Hero in his tomb, and of his continued authority, for with this was intertwined, or rather upon this was based, the further sanctity of their customs.

Things so proceeded without hurt or cloud<sup>9</sup> until upon one most unfortunate day a certain man, bearing the vulgar name of Megalocrates,<sup>9</sup> which signifies a person whose health requires the use of a wide headgear,<sup>10</sup> discovered that a certain herb which grew in great abundance in their territory and had hitherto been thought useless would serve almost every purpose of the table, sufficing, according to its preparation, for meat, bread, vegetables, and salt, and, if properly distilled, for a liquor that would make the Nepioi even more drunk than did their native spirits.

From this discovery ensued a great plenty throughout the land, the population very rapidly increased, the fortunes of the wealthy grew to double, treble, and four times those which had formerly been known, the middle classes adopted a novel accent in speech and a gait hitherto unusual, while great numbers of the poor acquired

the power of living upon so small a proportion of foul air, dull light, stagnant water, and many crusts as would have astonished their nicer forefathers. Meanwhile this great period of progress could not but lead to further discoveries, and the Nepioi had soon produced whole colleges in which were studied the arts useful to mankind and constantly discovered a larger and a larger number of surprising and useful things. At last the Nepioi (though this, perhaps, will hardly be credited) were capable of travelling underground, flying through the air, conversing with men a thousand miles away in a moment of time, and committing suicide painlessly whenever there arose occasion for that exercise.

It may be imagined with what reverence the authors of all these boons, the members of the learned colleges, were regarded; and how their opinions had in the eyes and ears of the Nepioi an unanswerable character.

Now it so happened that in one of these colleges a professor of more than ordinary position emitted one day the opinion that Melek had lived only half as long ago as was commonly supposed. In proof of this he put forward the undoubted

truth that if Melek had lived at the time he was supposed to have lived, then he would have lived twice as long ago as he, the professor, said that he had lived. The more old-fashioned and stupid of the Nepioi murmured against such opinions, and though they humbly confessed themselves unable to discover any flaw in the professor's logic, they were sure he was wrong somewhere and they were greatly disturbed. But the opinion gained ground, and, what is more, this fruitful and intelligent surmise upon the part of the professor bred a whole series of further theories upon Melek, each of which contradicted the last but one, and the latest of which was always of so limpid and so self-evident a truth as to be accepted by whatever was intelligent and energetic in the population and especially by the young unmarried women of the wealthier classes. In this manner the epoch of Melek was reduced to five, to three, to two, to one thousand years. Then to five hundred, and at last to one hundred and fifty. But here was a trouble. The records of the State, which had been carefully kept for many centuries, showed no trace of Melek's coming during any part of the time, but always referred to him as a

long distant forerunner. There was not even any mention of a man twelve foot high, nor even of one a little over 93 inches round the chest. At last it was proposed by an individual of great courage that he might be allowed to open the tomb of Melek and afterwards, if they so pleased, suffer death. This privilege was readily granted to him by the Archon. The worthy reformer, therefore, prised open<sup>11</sup> the sacred shrine and found within it absolutely nothing whatsoever.

Upon this there arose among the Nepioi all manner of schools<sup>12</sup> and discussions, some saying this and some that, but none with the certitude of old. Their customs fell into disrepute, and even the very professors themselves were occasionally doubted when they laid down the law upon matters in which they alone were competent—as, for instance, when they asserted that the moon was made of a peculiarly delicious edible substance<sup>13</sup> which increased in savour when it was preserved in the store-rooms of the housewives; or when they affirmed with every appearance of truth that no man did evil. and that wilful murder, arson, cruelty to the innocent and the weak, and deliberate fraud were of no more disadvantage to the



general state, or to men single, than the drinking of a cup of cold water.

So things proceeded until one day, when all custom and authority had fallen into this really lamentable deliquescence", fleets were observed upon the sea, manned by men-at-arms, the admiral of which sent a short message to the Archon proposing that the people of the country should send to him and his one-half of their yearly wealth for ever, "or," so the message proceeded, "take the consequences." Upon the Archon communicating this to the people there arose at once an infinity of babble, some saying one thing and some another, some proposing to pay neighbouring savages to come in and fight the invaders, others saying it would be cheaper to compromise with a large sum, but the most part agreeing that the wisest thing would be for the Archon and his great-aunt to go out to the fleet in a little boat and persuade the enemy's admiral (as they could surely easily do) that while most human acts were of doubtful responsibility and not really wicked, yet the invasion, and, above all, the impoverishment of the Nepioi was so foul a wrong as would



certainly call down upon its fiendish perpetrator the fires of heaven.

While the Archon and his great-aunt were rowing out in the little boat a few doddering<sup>19</sup> old men and superstitious females slunk off to consult the bronze tablets, and there found under Schedule XII these words: "If an enemy threaten the State, you shall arm and repel him." In their superstition the poor old chaps, with their half-daft<sup>19</sup> female devotees accompanying them, tottered back to the crowds to persuade them to some ridiculous fanaticism or other, based on no better authority than the non-existent Melek and his absurd and exploded authority.

Judge of their horror when, as they neared the city, they saw from the height whereon the temple stood that the invaders had landed, and, having put to the sword all the inhabitants without exception, were proceeding to make an inventory of the goods and to settle the place as conquerors. The admiral summoned this remnant of the nation, and hearing what they had to say treated them with the greatest courtesy and kindness and pensioned them off for their remaining years, during which period they so instructed him

and his fighting men in the mysteries of their religion as quite to convert them, and in a sense to found the Nepioian State over again; but it should be mentioned that the admiral, by way of precaution, changed that part of the religion which related to the tomb of Melek and situated the shrine in the very centre of the crater of an active volcano<sup>17</sup> in the neighbourhood, which by night and day, at every season of the year, belched forth molten rock so that none could approach it within fifteen miles.

## CHAPTER VII

### J. B. PRIESTLEY

(1894- )

[Mr. J. B. Priestley is a modern novelist and critic. He is the author of many delightful books, the best known of which is "The Good Companions." He also wrote a Life of George Meredith. The extract that follows is taken from "The English Comic Characters." It is an essay in literary criticism. Mr. Priestley gives us his own reading of the character of Mr. Micawber as created by Dickens, with whom you are already familiar. Mr. Priestley heightens our enjoyment of literature, and himself puts forth a literary effort of no mean achievement, as all true critics should. After reading this essay go back to the selections from Dickens which deal with Mr. Micawber, and see if you do not understand and enjoy them better than you did before. If you have time get hold of a copy of David Copperfield and find the other passages to which Mr. Priestley refers.]

## Mr. MICAWBER

It is odd to think of the sinister Mr. Murdstone as the tool of Providence, acting unwittingly as its compensating finger, restoring the balance in the affairs of poor little Copperfield. But that is what he was. The ten-year-old David is immured in Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse, with its dirt and decaying floors and scuffling old grey rats. But he must have lodgings, cheap lodgings, and so Mr. Murdstone bethinks himself of a certain not very successful agent of the firm who has a room to let in Windsor Terrace, City Road, and decides that David shall go there. David is taken into the counting-house and introduced to his new landlord:

"A stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one, and very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face, which he turned full upon me. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirtcollar on. He carried a jaunty sort of stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it; and a quizzing-glass hung outside his coat,—for ornament. I afterwards found, as he very seldom

looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did. . . . ."

Mr. Micawber is unquestionably the greatest of all Dickens' comic figures. Unlike so many of the others, he is droll both in character and in speech; he would be vastly entertaining if he were only described to us, if we were only allowed to see him from a distance and never met him face to face or heard him speak; the idea of him is comic; but in addition to that, of course, he is infinitely droll in speech, always saying the kind of thing we expect him to say but always saying it better, being more himself, so to speak, every time we meet him, as such persons are in real life.

Really great absurdities of speech are like really great passages of poetry, they cannot be analysed any more than a scent can be analysed; they are simply miraculous assemblages of words. Why they should be so ridiculous is, and must remain, a mystery. Faced with them, we can only enjoy and give thanks, taking our analysis elsewhere. In the last resort, speech and character cannot, of course, be separated, one being the expression of the other, and concerning Mr. Micawber's character there is a great deal to be



said, so that his delicious conversation, which in its highest flights of absurdity, as we have seen, is beyond analysis, can be very briefly examined in passing. Its most obvious characteristic is its trick of anti-climax'. Mr. Micawber indulges in a very florid and theatrical rhetoric that always breaks down; just when his fantastic bark appears to be safely launched on the flood of oratory, we hear the grating of the keel and discover that he has run aground; his habit of giving everything a false dignity in his talk (which perhaps reaches its climax in his reference to the man from the water-works as a "Minion of Power"), as if he were not an impecunious commercial traveller chatting with his friends but a statesman addressing the senate of some vast empire, is ridiculous enough, but it is made still more ridiculous by the fact that he cannot keep it up, his invention or his vocabulary not being equal to the demand, so that he inevitably flounders and breaks down. But a further touch of absurdity is added by the fact that though—so to speak—the matter breaks down, the manner does not: we can realise that at the moment when his oratory is crashing down into the commonplace, his pompousness is be-

coming even more marked, that "certain condescending roll in his voice" and that "certain indescribable air of doing something genteel" being more noticeable than ever. Nothing, we imagine, that he ever says can be delivered with such a dignified and genteel air as that "In short" which always arrives when his first gushing stream of oratory is drying up and he is casting about—usually in vain—for other springs of noble and resounding speech. We have only to take a single scene, let us say that in which he says good-bye to David before leaving for Plymouth in the earlier part of the book, to discover several excellent examples of this oratorical anti-climax and bathos. Mr. Micawber, with his capital histrionic sense, is aware of the solemnity of the occasion and is in a rather mournfully didactic mood "Procrastination," he remarks to David, "is the thief of time. collar him." Touching on Mrs. Micawber's father, who has been hurled into the conversation by Mrs. Micawber, he observes: "Take him for all in all, we ne'er shall—in short, make the acquaintance, probably, of anybody else possessing, at his time of life, the same legs for gaiters, and able to read the same description of print,

without spectacles." And then later when he gives us his great contribution to economics and ethics: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, Annual expenditure twenty pounds nought and six, result misery. The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the God of Day goes down upon the dreary scene, and—in short, you are for ever floored. As I am." And when he had said this, we are told, Mr. Micawber drank a glass of punch with an air of great enjoyment and satisfaction, and whistled the College Hornpipe.' As well he might, for, having expressed the misery of his position in what he considers such excellent rhetoric (for he himself soars high above bathos), he is perfectly happy, for he is an orator, an artist; he has the so-called "artistic temperament," and is indeed perhaps our very best example of it.

Too much has been made of Mr. Micawber's mere hopefulness: the phrase about "waiting for something to turn up" seems almost to have hypnotised everybody. Not that he was not supremely hopeful, one of the ripest of optimists, but he cannot be explained merely in terms of optimism:

the analysis must be carried much further. His temperament is, of course, extremely elastic; his moods are like quicksilver, and much of his drollery arises from his astonishingly rapid changes from the very depths of despair to the height of gaiety and good-fellowship. When creditors, dirty-faced men for the most part, called at his house and shouted "Swindlers" and "Robbers" up the stairs, Mr. Micawber, it will be remembered, "would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor; but within half an hour afterwards he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out, humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever." And when little David visited him in the Marshalsea, Mr. Micawber wept and solemnly conjured his youthful visitor to take warning by his fate, but then immediately afterwards borrowed a shilling, sent out for some porter, sat down to his roommate's loin of mutton, and was his glorious self again. He positively juggles with his moods, and can touch the extremes within the space of a single sentence. One of the most amusing, though by



no means one of the quickest, of his changes is that at Canterbury when he and David meet for the first time since the early days in London. The three of them (for Mrs. Micawber is there—seeing the Medway) sit down to fish, roast veal, fried sausage-meat, partridge, and pudding, wine, strong ale, and after dinner, a bowl of hot punch; the evening is decidedly festive, healths are drunk all round, Mr. Micawber delivers an eulogium on the character of Mrs. Micawber (as well he might), and they end by singing “Auld Lang Syne” and “Here’s a hand, my trusty frere”—Mr. Micawber throughout being the very picture of conviviality and high spirits. Yet David receives the following letter early the next morning, a letter clearly written within quarter of an hour after his departure the previous night:

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

The die is cast—all is over. Hiding the ravages of care with a sickly mask of mirth, I have not informed you, this evening, that there is no hope of the remittance! Under these circumstances, alike humiliating to contemplate, and humiliating to relate, I have discharged the pecuniary liability contracted at this establishment, by giving



a note of hand, made payable fourteen days after date, at my residence. Pentonville, London. When it becomes due, it will not be taken up. The result is destruction. The bolt is impending, and the tree must fall.

Let the wretched man who now addresses you, my dear Copperfield, be a beacon to you through life. He writes with that intention, and in that hope. If he could think himself of so much use, one gleam of day light, by possibility, penetrate into the cheerless dungeon of his remaining existence—though his longevity is, at present (to say the least of it), extremely problematical.

This is the last communication, my dear Copperfield, you will ever receive.

From

The

Beggared Outcast.

WILKINS MICAWBER.

On receipt of this startling communication, David immediately runs to the hotel in the hope of being able to comfort his friend, but on the way there he meets the London coach—"with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber up behind; Mr. Micawber, the very picture of tranquil enjoyment, smiling at Mrs.

Micawber's conversation, eating walnuts out of a paper bag, with a bottle sticking out of his breast-pocket." The Beggared Outcast had promptly vanished once he had written that heart-rending letter, and his place had been probably taken at once by Mr. Micawber the genteel man of the world, and for the nonce, the complacent author.

The secret of Mr. Micawber is that he does not really live in this world at all: he lives in a world of his own. It is a world in which he himself is clearly a man of talent, for whom great prizes are waiting round the next corner, where an I.O.U. is clearly set out and given to the proper person or an entry in a little notebook is as good as cash down, where everything is larger and simpler and richer and more romantic than the things of this world. But the real world, observing that Wilkins Micawber will not consent to live in it, plans a hearty revenge. It contrives that the said Micawber shall be for ever in difficulties; that his talent shall pass unrecognised (except by Mrs. Micawber) and his offers--as she herself tells us--received with contumely; that neither corn nor coals' shall sustain him, and that he shall be for ever head over ears in debt, existing in a

wilderness of notes of hand, discounted bills, and I. O. U.'s; and so, eternally jostled by creditors and bailiff's, in and out of the debtors' prison, exchanging one set of miserable lodgings for another, pawning the few remaining possessions in order to pay for the next meal, he and his wife and their ever-increasing family are for ever driven from pillar to post can never breathe freely, clear themselves, settle down as decent citizens willing and able to look any man in the face; and thus would seem to be in a truly wretched condition. Short of actual tence—though his longevity is, at present (to say be dangerously near a criminal proceeding—it is hardly possible to imagine an existence more squalid, uncomfortable, and hopeless. This world, it would seem, has revenged itself very thoroughly. But actually it has done nothing of the kind, for Mr. Micawber remains unscathed, living as he does in some other world of his own.

What chance has poverty, with its poor shifts and wretched limitations, its dinginess and drabness, with a mind so wedded to high romance, so intoxicated with opulent images and phrases, so

richly nourished by the milk and honey of words? What does it matter what facts have to be faced if they are first sent to the carnival of the romantic imagination and so always return the strangest and most fascinating company, still moving to music in their tragic and comic masks? David was a poor little fellow of ten, a timid little washer of bottles, when he lodged, dingily and precariously like a mouse, with the Micawbers; but Mr. Micawber, meeting him again after a lapse of years, can drink "to the days when my friend Copperfield and myself were younger, and fought our way in the world side by side." On their first meeting again, at Canterbury, when David tells him that he is now at school, he can remark: "Although a mind like my friend Copperfield's does not require that cultivation which, without his knowledge of men and things, it would require, still it is a rich soil teeming with latent vegetation." Later, when they meet in the company of Traddles, Mr. Micawber refers to his affairs as a somewhat romantic historian, engaged in the chronicle of the whole world, might refer to the position of some great empire at a crisis in its history:



"You find us, Copperfield," said Mr. Micawber, with one eye on Traddles, "at present established, on what may be designated as a small and unassuming scale; but, you are aware that I have, in the course of my career, surmounted difficulties, and conquered obstacles. You are no stranger to the fact, that there have been periods of my life, when it has been requisite that I should pause, until certain unexpected events should turn up; when it has been necessary that I should fall back, before making what I trust I shall not be accused of presumption in terming—a spring. The present is one of those momentous stages in the life of man. You find me, fallen back, *for* a spring; and I have every reason to believe that a vigorous leap will shortly be the result."

And his subsequent review of the situation, his parting speech, in the manner in which it succeeds in casting a curious glamour over everything, transforming the most trumpery and prosaic matter into something rich and strange, gives us the complete Micawber, soaring high above this world of "offices and the witness-box":

"My dear Copperfield, I need hardly tell you that to have beneath our roof, under existing



circumstances, a mind like that which gleams—if I may be allowed the expression—in your friend Traddles, is an unspeakable comfort. With a washerwoman, who exposes hard-bake<sup>9</sup> for sale in her parlor-window, dwelling next door, and a Bow-street officer<sup>10</sup> residing over the way, you may imagine that his society is a source of consolation to myself and to Mrs. Micawber. I am at present, my dear Copperfield, engaged in the sale of corn upon commission. It is not an avocation of a remanerative description—in other words, it does *not* pay—and some temporary embarrassments of a pecuniary nature have been the consequence. I am, however, delighted to add that I have now an immediate prospect of something turning up (I am not at liberty to say in what direction), which I trust will enable me to provide, permanently, both for myself and for your friend Traddles, in whom I have an unaffected interest. You may, perhaps, be prepared to hear that Mrs. Micawber is in a state of health which renders it not wholly improbable that an addition may be ultimately made to those pledges of affection which—in short, to the infantine group. Mrs. Micawber's family have been so

good as to express their dissatisfaction at this state of things. I have merely to observe that I am not aware it is any business of theirs, and that I repel that exhibition of feeling with scorn, and with defiance!"

An excellent example of our friend's Front Bench manner," in which every polysyllabic phrase suggests at least five thousand a year and a substantial pension. What is an empty pocket compared to such verbal riches? Selling corn upon commission may be a poor business, but once it is referred to as "not an avocation of a remunerative description" it somehow suggests that immense wealth is lying only just beyond the speaker's grasp; it takes us immediately into an atmosphere of prosperity. What is a balance at the bank to a man who has only to open his mouth to shower riches about him like some one in a fairy tale, whose very tongue is an alchemist?

Living in the world as he does, not as some poor devil trying to patch together a bare existence and evade his creditors, but as the central and heroic figure in that amazing chronicle, *The Life and Times of Wilkins Micawber, Lover, Husband, Father, Financier, and Philosopher, Mr. Micawber*

instinctively seizes hold of every situation, good or evil, that presents itself and makes the most of it. Faced with such romantic gusto, so fine an appreciation of a crisis, revelling even in profound despair and last farewells, ill fortune, try as it may, can hardly make itself felt. And the commonplace, that drab stuff which is the fabric of most of our days, vanishes entirely: it is hardly conceivable that Mr. Micawber can ever have had a dull moment. It would be difficult to imagine anything more dreary than the prospect of being a clerk to a petty solicitor in a small cathedral town, or anything less exciting and romantic than a family removal from London to Canterbury; but Mr. Micawber, on the eve of his removal to Uriah Heep's," stands before us as a man who has just seen Troy burn and is now about to embark on an Odyssey." And so, of course, he is: it is we who are blind and deaf and spiritless in our boredom. "It may be expected," the great creature declares to his friends, "that on the eve of a migration which will consign us to a perfectly new existence, I should offer a few valedictory" remarks to two such friends as I see before me. But all that I have to say in this way, I have said.

Whatever station in society I may attain, through the medium of the learned profession of which I am about to become an unworthy member, I shall endeavour not to disgrace, and Mrs. Micawber will be safe to adorn". Being able now to cast off his disguise" (the name "Mortimer" and a pair of spectacles—and who can doubt that he enjoyed both immensely?), he speaks as one who has long been an exile or spent half a lifetime in remote hiding-places, and his language leaps up to grapple with the romantic moment: "The cloud has passed from the dreary scene, and the God of Day is once more high upon the mountain tops. On Monday next, on the arrival of the four o'clock afternoon coach at Canterbury, my foot will be on my native heath—my name, Micawber.

No sooner is Australia mentioned ("the land, the only land, for myself and my family"—though he has obviously never given it a thought before) than he sees a new part for himself and plunges into it. Within an hour or so, we are told, he is walking the streets of Canterbury—"expressing, in the hardy roving manner he assumed, the unsettled habits of a temporary sojourner in the land; and looking at the bullocks, as they came by,



with the eye of an Australian farmer." And as the plans for emigration mature, he becomes still more wildly colonial. What could be better than the steps he has taken to familiarise himself and his family with the conditions of Australian life?

"My eldest daughter attends at five every morning at a neighbouring establishment, to acquire the process—if process it may be called—of milking cows. My younger children are instructed to observe, as closely as circumstances will permit, the habits of the pigs and poultry maintained in the poorer parts of this city: a pursuit from which they have, on two occasions, been brought home, within an inch of being run over. I have myself directed some attention, during the past week, to the art of baking; and my son Wilkins has issued forth with a walking-stick and driven cattle, when permitted, by the rugged hirelings who had them in charge, to render any voluntary service in that direction—which I regret to say, for the credit of our nature, was not often; he being generally warned, with imprecations, to desist."

Once on board the ship, he combines, with great skill, both the colonial and nautical charac-



ters. With a low-crowned straw hat, a complete suit of oilskins, a telescope, and a trick of "casting up his eye at the sky as looking out for dirty weather," he is nothing less than an old salt, and we can be sure that he carried out his intention of spinning an occasional yarn before the galley-fire. And he has also provided himself and his family with enormous clasp-knives and wooden spoons, and insists upon their drinking out of "villainous little tin pots" although there are plenty of glasses in the room, so determined is he that they shall stand before Albion<sup>18</sup> as "denizens of the forest." "The luxuries of the old country we abandon," he announces with an intense pleasure that is the very height of luxury. Happy Mr. Micawber, with every hour adding pages to his romantic history, moving sublimely in a world of his own creation, clad in the armour of his soaring fancy, the conqueror of circumstances, merely adding its variations to his swelling moods as he adds the lemons to the punch. He is a greater figure in the history of romantic idealism than most of its professors for he lays bare more of its secrets, as he rolls out his "few remarks" and points his single eyeglass over the steaming bowl, than whole



## CHAPTER VIII

### KATHERINE MANSFIELD

(1889-1923)

[Katherine Mansfield was the pen-name of Katherine Beauchamp. She was born in New Zealand in 1889 and died when she was only thirty-four years of age. She received her education in London and early made her mark as a writer of short stories. It was her reputation as a writer that was responsible for her friendship with John Middleton Murry, the well-known literary critic, whom she ultimately married. But her life was a long and continuous struggle with disease. In the company of her husband she went to different places in search of health but without any improvement. She died in France in 1923.

Katherine Mansfield's art of writing has a subtlety about it which has to be understood to be properly enjoyed. Apparently her stories are without any organized plot. To the superficial eye they are a mere collection of simple facts,

perhaps of little importance in themselves. But running through them there is a strain of emotion which gives the whole story a new meaning and which creates an atmosphere in which the significance of the main argument stands out clearly. An insight into human character and fidelity to truth are the chief characteristics of Miss Mansfield's writings.

Her chief works are: "Bliss", "The Garden Party", "The Dove's Nest" and "Something Childish".

The following extract is taken from "The Garden Party." It is a record of human suffering and misery which is unrelieved by even a single ray of hope. The point of the story is reached in the anguished cry of Ma Parker, "What have I done?" The answer implied in the story is, "Such is life!"]

#### LIFE OF MA PARKER

When the literary gentleman, whose flat old Ma Parker cleaned every Tuesday, opened the door to her that morning, he asked after her grandson. Ma Parker stood on the door-mat inside the dark little hall, and she stretched out her hand to help her gentleman shut the door before



she replied. 'We buried 'im yesterday, sir,' she said quietly.

'Oh, dear me! I'm sorry to hear that,' said the literary gentleman in a shocked tone. He was in the middle of his breakfast. He wore a very shabby dressing gown and carried a crumpled newspaper in one hand. But he felt awkward. He could hardly go back to the warm sitting-room without saying something—something more. Then because these people set such stores by funerals he said kindly, 'I hope the funeral went off all right.'

'Beg parding, sir?' said old Ma Parker huskily.

Poor old Bird! She did look dashed. 'I hope the funeral was a--a--success,' said he. Ma Parker gave no answer. She bent her head and hobbled off to the kitchen, clasping the old fish bag that held her cleaning things and an apron and a pair of felt shoes. The literary gentleman raised his eyebrows and went back to his breakfast.

'Overcome, I suppose,' he said aloud, helping himself to the marmalade.

Ma Parker drew the two jetty spears out of her toque' and hung it behind the door. She



unhooked her worn jacket and hung that up too. Then she tied her apron and sat down to take off her boots. To take off her boots or to put them on was an agony to her, but it had been an agony for years. In fact, she was so accustomed to the pain that her face was drawn and screwed up ready for the twinge before she'd so much as untied the laces. That over, she sat back with a sigh and softly rubbed her knees. . . .

'Gran! Gran!' Her little grandson stood on her lap in his button boots. He'd just come in from playing in the street.

'Look what a state you've made your gran's skirt into—you wicked boy!'

But he put his arms round her neck and rubbed his cheek against hers.

'Gran, gi' us a penny!' he coaxed.

'Be off with you; Gran ain't got no pennies.'

'Yes, you 'ave.'

'No, I ain't.'

'Yes, you've. Gi' us one!'

Already she was feeling for the old, squashed, black leather purse.

'Well, what'll you give your Gran?'

He gave a shy little laugh and pressed closer.

She felt his eyelid quivering against her cheek. 'I ain't got ncthing,' he murmured.....

The old woman sprang up, seized the iron kettle off the gas stove and took it over to the sink. The noise of the water drumming in the kettle deadened her pain, it seemed. She filled the pail, too, and the washing-up bowl.

It would take a whole book to describe the state of that kitchen. During the week the literary gentleman 'did' for himself'. That is to say, he emptied the tea leaves now and again into a jam jar set aside for that purpose, and if he ran out of clean forks he wiped over one or two on the roller towel. Otherwise, as he explained to his friends, his 'system' was quite simple, and he couldn't understand why people made all this fuss about housekeeping.

'You simply dirty everything you've got, get a hag in once a week to clean up, and the thing's done.'

The result looked like a gigantic dustbin. Even the floor was littered with toast crusts, envelopes, cigarette ends. But Ma Parker bore him no grudge. She pitied the poor young gentleman for having no one to look after him. Out of

the smudgy little window you could see an immense expanse of sad-looking sky, and whenever there were clouds they looked very worn, old clouds, frayed at the edges, with holes in them, or dark stains like tea.

While the water was heating, Ma Parker began sweeping the floor. 'Yes,' she thought, as the broom knocked, 'what with one thing and another I've had my share. I've had a hard life.'

Even the neighbours said that of her. Many a time, hobbling home with her fish bag, she heard them, waiting at the corner, or leaning over the area railings, say among themselves, 'She's had a hard life, has Ma Parker.' And it was so true she wasn't in the least proud of it. It was just as if you were to say she lived in the basement-back at Number 27. A hard life!.....

At sixteen she'd left Stratford and come up to London as kitchen maid. 'Yes she was born in Stratford-on-Avon.' Shakespeare, 'sir?' No, people was always asking her about him. But she'd never heard his name until she saw it on the theatres.

Nothing remained of Stratford except that 'sitting in the fire-place of a evening you could

see the stars through the chimley<sup>s</sup>,' and 'Mother always 'ad 'er side of bacon 'anging from the ceiling.' And there was something—a bush, there was—at the front door, that smelt ever so nice. But the bush was very vague. She'd only remembered it once or twice in the hospital, when she'd been taken bad.

That was a dreadful place—her first place. She was never allowed out. She never went upstairs except for prayers morning and evening. It was a fair cellar. And the cook was a cruel woman. She used to snatch away her letters from home before she'd read them, and throw them in the range<sup>o</sup> because they made her dreamy . . . . .and the beedles! Would you believe it?—until she came to London she'd never seen a black beedle. Here Ma always gave a little laugh, as though—not to have seen a black beedle! Well! It was as if to say you'd never seen your own feet.

When that family was sold up she went as 'help' to a doctor's house, and after two years there, on the run from morning till night, she married her husband. He was a baker.

'A Baker, Mrs. Parker!' the literary gentleman would say. For occasionally he laid aside



his tomes and lent an ear, at least, to this product called Life. 'It must be rather nice to be married to a baker!'

Mrs. Parker didn't look so sure.

'Such a clean trade,' said the gentleman.

Mrs. Parker didn't look convinced.

'And didn't you like handing the new loaves to the customers?'

'Well, sir,' said Mrs. Parker, 'I wasn't in the shop above a great deal. We had thirteen little ones and buried seven of them. If it wasn't the 'ospital it was the infirmary, you might say!'

'You might, *indeed*, Mrs. Parker!' said the gentleman, shuddering, and taking up his pen again.

'Yes, seven had gone, and while the six were still small her husband was taken ill with consumption. It was flour on the lungs, the doctor told her at the time. . . . Her husband set up in bed with his shirt pulled over his head, and the doctor's finger drew a circle on his back.

'Now, if we were to cut him open *here*, Mrs. Parker,' said the doctor, 'you'd find his lungs chock-a-block with white powder. Breathe, my good fellow' And Mrs. Parker never knew for



certain whether she saw or whether she fancied she saw a great fan of white dust come out of her poor dear husband's lips.....

But the struggle she'd had to bring up those six little children and keep herself to herself.<sup>10</sup> Terrible it had been! Then, just when they were old enough to go to school her husband's sister came to stop with them to help things along, and she hadn't been there more than two months when she fell down a flight of steps and hurt her spine. And for five years Ma Parker had another baby—and such a one for crying!—to look after. Then young Maudie went wrong and took her sister Alice with her; the two boys emigrated, and young Jim went to India with the army, and Ethel, the youngest, married a good-for-nothing little waiter who died of ulcers the year little Lennie was born. And now little Lennie—my grandson.....

The piles of dirty cups, dirty dishes were washed and dried. The ink-black knives were cleaned with a piece of potato and finished off with a piece of cork. The table was scrubbed, and the dresser and the sink that had sardine tails swimming in it. ....

He'd never been a strong child—never from the first. He'd been one of those fair babies that everybody took for a girl. Silvery fair curls he had, blue eyes, and a little freckle like a diamond on one side of his nose. The trouble she and Ethel had had to rear that child! The things out of the newspapers they tried him with! Every Sunday morning Ethel would read aloud while Ma Parker did her washing.

'Dear Sir,—Just a line to let you know my little Myrtil was laid out for dead...After four bottils . . gained 8lb. in 9 weeks, *and is still putting it on.*'

And then the egg-cup of ink would come off the dresser and the letter would be written, and Ma would buy a postal order on her way to work next morning. But it was no use. Nothing made little Lennie put it on. Taking him to the cemetery, even, never gave him a colour; a nice shake-up in the bus never improved his appetite.

But he was gran's boy from the first.....

'Whose boy are you?' said old Ma Parker, straightening up from the stove and going over to the smudgy window. And a little voice, so warm, so close, it half stifled her—it seemed to be

in her breast under her heart—laughed out, and said, 'I'm gran's boy!'

At that moment there was a sound of steps, and the literary gentleman appeared, dressed for walking.

'Oh, Mrs. Parker, I'm going out.'

'Very good, sir.'

'And you'll find your half-crown in the tray of the inkstand.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'Oh, by the way, Mrs. Parker,' said the literary gentleman quickly, 'you didn't throw away any cocoa last time you were here—did you?'

'No, sir.'

'*Very* strange. I could have sworn I left a teaspoonful of cocoa in the tin.' He broke off. He said softly and firmly, 'You'll always tell me when you throw things away—won't you, Mrs. Parker?' And he walked off very well pleased with himself, convinced, in fact, he'd shown Mrs. Parker that under his apparent carelessness he was as vigilant as a woman.

The door banged. She took her brushes and cloths into the bedroom. But when she began

to make the bed, smoothing, tucking, patting the thought of little Lennie was unbearable. Why did he have to suffer so? That's what she couldn't understand. Why should a little angel child have to arsk for his breath and fight for it? There was no sense in making a child suffer like that.

..From Lennie's little box of a chest there came a sound as though something was boiling. There was a great lump of something bubbling in his chest that he couldn't get rid of. When he coughed the sweat sprang out on his head; his eyes bulged, his hands waved, and the great lump bubbled as a potato knocks in a saucepan. But what was more awful than all was when he didn't cough he sat against the pillow and never spoke or answered, or even made as if he heard. Only he looked offended.

'It's not your poor old gran's doing it, my lovey, said old Ma Parker, patting back the damp hair from his little scarlet ears. But Lennie moved his head and edged away. Dreadfully offended with her he looked—and solemn. He bent his head and looked at her side-ways as though he couldn't have believed it of his gran.

But at the last . . . Ma Parker threw the coun-



terpane over the bed. No, she simply couldn't think about it. It was too much—she'd had too much in her life to bear. She'd borne it up till now, she'd kept herself to herself, and never once had she been seen to cry. Never by a living soul. Not even her own children had seen Ma break down. She'd kept a proud face always. But now! Lennie gone—what had she? She had nothing. He was all she'd got from life, and now he was took too. Why must it all have happened to me? she wondered. 'What have I done?' said old Ma Parker. 'What have I done?'"

As she said those words she suddenly let fall her brush. She found herself in the kitchen. Her misery was so terrible that she pinned on her hat, put on her jacket and walked out of the flat like a person in a dream. She did not know what she was doing. She was like a person so dazed by the horror of what has happened that he walks away—anywhere, as though by walking away he could escape.....

It was cold in the street. There was a wind like ice. People went flitting by, very fast; the men walked like scissors; the women trod like cats. And nobody knew—nobody cared. Even



if she broke down, if at last, after all these years, she were to cry, she'd find herself in the lock-up as like as not.

But at the thought of crying it was as though little Lennie leapt in his gran's arms. Ah, that's what she wants to do, my dove. Gran wants to cry. If she could only cry now, cry for a long time, over everything, beginning with her first place and the cruel cook, going on to the doctor's, and then the seven little ones, death of her husband, the children's leaving her, and all the years of misery that led up to Lennie. But to have a proper cry over all these things would take a long time. All the same, the time for it had come. She must do it. She couldn't put it off any longer; she couldn't wait any more. Where could she go?

'She's had a hard life, has Ma Parker.' Yes, a hard life, indeed! Her chin began to tremble: there was no time to lose. But where? Where?

She couldn't go home; Ethel was there. It would frighten Ethel out of her life. She couldn't sit on a bench anywhere; people would come arsking her questions. She couldn't possibly go back to the gentleman's flat; she had no right to

cry in strangers' houses. If she sat on some steps a policeman would speak to her.

Oh, wasn't there anywhere where she could hide and keep herself to herself and stay as long as she liked, not disturbing anybody, and nobody worrying her? Wasn't there anywhere in the world where she could have her cry out—at last?

Ma Parker stood, looking up and down. The icy wind blew out her apron into a balloon. And now it began to rain. There was nowhere."

## NOTES

### DAVID GOES TO SCHOOL

David Copperfield was a posthumous child, his father having died a few months before his birth. His mother was a gentle but weak woman and when David was only a few years old, married a second time.

Mr. Murdstone, David's step-father, was a very cruel and hypocritical person. It was he who made young David's life a chapter of misfortunes and sore trials. He believed in 'firmness' which was another name for tyranny. One day he asked David to repeat his lessons to him and whenever he made a mistake thrashed him with a cane. Smarting under the pain David begged to be excused, but Murdstone got all the more furious and holding his neck within his arm as in a vice beat him mercilessly. In a fit of desperation David caught Murdstone's hand within his teeth and bit it through. For this offence he was treated like a dangerous criminal and kept in solitary confinement in a room for five days. After this period he was regarded as unsafe to be kept at home and sent to a school situated in the suburbs of London. This School was more of a reformatory than an educational institution, where students were treated worse than criminals. In the present chapter you will study David's journey to the School and get a foretaste of what was in store for him within its grim walls.

*'My pocket handkerchief was quite wet—Through weeping.*

*'Carrier—A person who plies his cart on hire.*

<sup>1</sup> *Peggotty*—David's nurse. In the midst of his misfortunes she was a source of very great comfort to him.

<sup>4</sup> *Stays*—Corset. Woman's close-fitting inner bodice.

<sup>6</sup> *Without a solitary button on her gown*—Peggotty was so fat that whenever she was in a fit of excitement the buttons from her gown would burst.

<sup>6</sup> *Roderick Random*—The hero of Smollett's novel, "The Adventures of Roderick Random". A selfish and unprincipled adventurer.

<sup>7</sup> *That Captain in the Royal British Navy*—Another character in "The Adventures of Roderick Random".

<sup>8</sup> *Resolution*—Mood, state of mind.

<sup>9</sup> *Deader*—More dead. (Slang).

<sup>10</sup> *Stage-cutch*—Stage-coach.

<sup>11</sup> *Barkis*—The name of the cart driver. He is in love with Peggotty, the nurse.

<sup>11</sup> *Blunderstone*—A place in Suffolk where David was born.

<sup>13</sup> *Prospectively*—In the future.

<sup>14</sup> *Mr. Peggotty*—Brother of the nurse.

<sup>14</sup> *Em'ly*—Daughter of Tom, the brother-in-law of Mr. Peggotty. She is an orphan child and lives with her uncle. She is very pretty, and David loves her with an innocent childish love.

<sup>16</sup> *Pole*—A shaft in the front part of a vehicle.

<sup>17</sup> *Master Murdstone*—David. He was the step-son of Mr. Murdstone.

<sup>18</sup> *Casters*—Also spelt castors, cruet-stand, bottles containing condiments for table.

<sup>19</sup> *Bouncing*—Bustling, Noisy.

<sup>10</sup> *Six-foot*—The waiter wanted to make fun of David who was so small.

<sup>11</sup> *A-kimbo*—With hands on hips and elbows turned outwards.

<sup>12</sup> *Speckled choker*—A spotted neck-tie. (Slang).

<sup>13</sup> *Did for him*—Killed him.

<sup>14</sup> *Whopping*—Thrashing (Slang.)

<sup>15</sup> *Pairint*—Parent.

<sup>16</sup> *Wittles*—Victuals, food.

## BARKIS'S WOOING

In the last chapter you have read how Barkis fell in love with Peggotty, and how he conveyed his proposal through David Copperfield. Peggotty was very much amused by the strangeness of this message, and had a good laugh over it, but her life was so much devoted to the service of David and his mother, Clara, that she did not respond much to Barkis's "willingness". But when Murdstone and his sister introduced "firmness" into the family and made the life of David and Clara miserable she thought perhaps she would be forced to seek a shelter elsewhere. Soon after the death of David's mother, Peggotty received notice from the Murdstones to quit. She made up her mind to go to her brother. David also went with her to spend a few days with Mr. Peggotty's family. They travelled in Barkis's cart. It was during this journey that Barkis wooed the buxom and good-natured nurse in his own characteristic way. In this chapter Dickens is at his best in describing the innocent and homely joys of the simple, artless and honest country-folk of his days. Note that the Peggotty family speak a dialect peculiar to their part of England.



<sup>1</sup> *Ham*—Mr. Peggotty's nephew, an orphan, who lived in the same house with his uncle. He was David's companion during the latter's visits to Yarmouth.

<sup>2</sup> *Your'n—Yours.*

<sup>3</sup> *Thirty times three times over—Many times.*

<sup>4</sup> *Mrs. Gummidge*—Widow of Mr. Peggotty's partner in a boat. She was very fretful, much given to complaining about her being "a lone lorn creature". She thought everything in the world went contrary with her.

<sup>5</sup> *In a state of conglomeration*—Collected in a heap.

<sup>6</sup> *Porterage*—Carrying luggage.

<sup>7</sup> *Mawther*—Mother. Mr. Peggotty addressed Mrs. Gummidge by this name.

<sup>8</sup> *A lone lorn creetur*—A lonely and desolate person.

*Rumpled her hair*—spread them in disorder.

<sup>9</sup> *Bor'*—Boy.

<sup>10</sup> *Coaxed him into anything*—Persuaded him to do anything.

<sup>11</sup> *The loss I had sustained*—Reference is to the death of David's mother.

<sup>12</sup> *Steerforth*—A fellow student of David Copperfield at the Salem House School. He was very brilliant and had a reputation for bravery. He was introduced to the Peggotty household by David and took a fancy to Emily, whom he later persuaded to run away with him, only to discard her. He met his end by drowning in the sea.

<sup>13</sup> *Knowed*—Knew.

<sup>14</sup> *Fur off*—Far off.

<sup>15</sup> *Men*—Pieces in game of chess or draughts.

<sup>7</sup> *The colour mantling in her cheeks*—Flushed face.

<sup>18</sup> *Trotters*—Animal's feet used as food, as pig's trotters, sheep's trotters.

<sup>19</sup> *Flats*—Plain, low land.

<sup>20</sup> *Drab*—of dull brown colour.

<sup>21</sup> *Buff*—of dull yellow colour.

<sup>22</sup> *An old shoe*—according to English custom an old shoe thrown after the carriage of a couple about to be married brings good luck.

<sup>23</sup> *Contrairy*—Contrary.

<sup>24</sup> *Demure*—Grave, sober.

<sup>25</sup> *Tilt*—Canvas covering for cart.

<sup>26</sup> *Graces*—Goddesses of beauty and charm. According to the Romans there are three Graces, who are represented as embracing each other, to show that where one is, the others are also present.

## MR. MICAWBER

After the death of his mother David Copperfield was regarded as a useless burden by his step-father. He was sent to the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, where he was employed on six or seven shillings a week to wash empty bottles. It was here that he came across Mr. Micawber, one of Dicken's immortal characters. Mr. Micawber is perhaps one of the best known characters in the whole of English fiction. He is the embodiment of human hope which keeps alive even under the most adverse of circumstances, for Mr. Micawber is never too downcast and is for ever cheered up with the expectation that "something will turn up". His wife is his counterpart and both together form a composite personality that is without its equal both in the realms of fiction and truth. The

present chapter describes how, although faced with utter want and misery, they refuse to give up hope and continue to smile at misfortune.

<sup>1</sup> *Surtout*—over-coat (rare).

<sup>2</sup> *Tights*—Close fitting clothes.

<sup>3</sup> *Quizzing-glass*—Eye glass or monocle (rare).

<sup>4</sup> *Quinion*—Manager of the firm, "Murdstone and Grinby".

<sup>5</sup> *Condescending roll in his voice*—In a grand style which Micawber specially adopted when down in his luck.

<sup>6</sup> *In a burst of confidence*—In a confiding manner.

<sup>7</sup> *Peregrinations*—Walk. Micawber is fond of using big words.

<sup>8</sup> *Arcana*—Mysteries, Secrets.

<sup>9</sup> *Modern Babylon*—London is so called on account of its wealth, luxury and dissipation.

<sup>10</sup> *Counting-house*—Office.

<sup>11</sup> *Turn at a neighbouring pump*—Drink from a street water-pipe.

<sup>12</sup> *Orfling*—Orphan.

<sup>13</sup> *Workhouse*—Public institution where paupers are kept.

<sup>14</sup> *Stencilled*—Decorated, ornamented.

<sup>15</sup> *Experientia*—Experiences.

<sup>16</sup> *In the marines*—In the navy.

<sup>17</sup> *Houses*—business firms.

<sup>18</sup> *Veal-Cutlet*—Cutlet made of Calf-flesh.

<sup>19</sup> *Modicum*—A small quantity.

<sup>20</sup> *Saveloy*—Highly seasoned dried sausage.

<sup>21</sup> *Public-house*—Inn providing food, wines, and lodging.

<sup>22</sup> *Alamode*—fashionable.

<sup>23</sup> *With a good head to it*—With lot of foam at the top.

<sup>24</sup> *Suffered exquisitely*—Suffered very keenly.

<sup>25</sup> *Jack's delight being his lovely Nan*—A favourite song of the day.

<sup>26</sup> *Chiffonier*—A movable low cupboard.

<sup>27</sup> *Skittles*—Game played with nine pins.

<sup>28</sup> *Bake-house*—House or room for baking bread.

<sup>29</sup> *In the last extremity of shabbiness*—Very dirty.

<sup>30</sup> *Egg-hot*—Egg mixed with brandy or other spirits.

<sup>31</sup> *Murdstone and Grinby*—A firm dealing in wines, in which Mr. Murdstone had a share.

<sup>32</sup> *Casino*—A game of cards.

<sup>33</sup> *To be beforehand with the world*—Prepared for any emergency.

<sup>34</sup> *Luscious roll*—Rich tone.

### COLONEL NEWCOME AT THE "CAVE OF HARMONY"

Colonel Newcome having lost his mother at an early age, his father married again. His step-mother, outwardly a pious and religious lady, persecuted him most cruelly. She would not allow her twin sons, Hobson and Brian, to mix with him and generally treated him like a pariah in the house. When he grew up he fell in love with a young girl, the daughter of a French noble, who was a refugee in England, but his step-mother put an end to this little romance. Disgusted with this kind of life he went to India where he won his laurels and became a Colonel in the army. He married a poor widow who died soon after, leaving behind a boy, named Clive. The Colonel sent his son to England to receive suitable education. Having re-

tired from service he himself came back to England and was very glad to find his son grown into a youth of generous instincts and noble feelings. Both father and son went to an inn, known as "The Cave of Harmony", and were very pleased to find there a group of young merry-makers. The chapter incidentally throws light on the character of the Colonel, who is a simple-minded gentleman, believing in a strict code of honour and morality.

'*Pit*—That part of the auditorium of a theatre which is on the floor of the house.

'*Acheron*—A river of the lower regions. "The river of sorrows".

'*Avernus*—A lake supposed to be the entrance to the infernal regions.

'*The goes of stout*—Quantities of stout, a kind of heavy beer.

'"*The Chough and Crow*", *The Red Cross Knight*", "*The bloom is in the Rye*"—Popular songs of the day.

'*Encored*—Demanded once more.

'*Mr. Sheridan*—Richard Brinsby Sheridan, a noted comedian of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His famous works are "*The Rivals*", "*The School for Scandal*" and "*The Critic*".

'*Captain Morris, Colonel Hanger, Professor Porson*—Other wits of those times.

'*Wag*—A person given to jesting or practical jokes.

'*Improvvisatore*—One who can compose extempore.

'*The Critic*—A famous farce by Richard Sheridan.

'*Don Ferolo Whiskerandos*—A character in "*The Critic*". He is a Spanish prisoner in love with the daughter of the governor of Tilbury Fort.



<sup>13</sup> *King of Corpus*—A friend of Pendennis, the writer of the story, Corpus refers to Corpus Christi College in Oxford.

<sup>14</sup> *Pulling some dreadful long bow*—Exaggerating, telling a tall story.

<sup>15</sup> *Maxima debetur pueris*—The greatest reverence is due to the boy. The real phrase is, "Maxima Debetur puero reverentia".

<sup>16</sup> *Oratorio*—Semi-dramatic solemn musical composition.

<sup>17</sup> *Inclendon*—A noted musician of those times.

<sup>18</sup> *Pat*—Ready for the occasion.

<sup>19</sup> *Bis*—In music a direction to repeat a phrase or a passage.

<sup>20</sup> *Peony*—A plant with large red flowers.

<sup>21</sup> *Flourishes and roulades*—Decorative additional notes uttered in quick succession; a parade of musical notes.

<sup>22</sup> *Molly*—The heroine of the ballad.

<sup>23</sup> *Dr. Primrose*—The hero of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," a kindly gentleman, devoid of worldly wisdom. He was thrown into prison for debt.

<sup>24</sup> *Naivete*—Simplicity, artlessness.

<sup>25</sup> *Captain Costigan*—A character in Thackeray's "Pendennis". He is a wild, tipsy Irishman.

<sup>26</sup> *Repertoire*—Stock of pieces that a performer knows.

<sup>27</sup> *Pindaree*—The Pindarees were organised gangs of robbers who infested Central India in the early days of British rule in this country.

<sup>28</sup> *Bacchanalians*—Followers of Bacchus, the god of wine; drunken merrymakers.

## NEWCOME BROTHERS

While Colonel Newcome was away in India his two step-brothers, Hobson Newcome and Sir Brian Newcome, had a roaring success as bankers and so far as material prosperity was concerned had nothing more to desire. But so far as the real values of life were concerned they lacked them miserably. They had no humane feelings and their snobbery was sickening. Their wives were even more arrogant than their husbands. The only exception in this circle of snobs was Ethel, the daughter of Sir Brian, a fine and honourable girl, though her brother, Barnes, more than made up for her good qualities by his mean and venomous nature. This chapter affords a good study in human character.

<sup>1</sup> *Lollipops*—Sweetmeats.

<sup>2</sup> *Nerot's and the Oriental*—Two inns.

<sup>3</sup> *Bruiser*—Prize-fighter.

<sup>4</sup> *I'll give it you*—Thrash you.

<sup>5</sup> *High-lows*—(archaic) boots reaching over ankles.

<sup>6</sup> *Brian and Hobson*—Step-brothers of Colonel Newcome.

<sup>7</sup> *That unlucky accident in the go-cart*—Colonel Newcome used to be very naughty in his boyhood. Once he upset his two brothers in a go-cart, for which he was severely punished by his step-mother.

<sup>8</sup> *Silver Waiters*—Silver Trays.

<sup>9</sup> *Cutaway coat*—Coat with skirt cut back from the waist.

<sup>10</sup> *Whiplash*—The lash of a whip.

<sup>11</sup> *Lady Ann*—Wife of Sir Brian Newcome.

<sup>12</sup> *Maria*—Wife of Hobson Newcome.

<sup>12</sup> *Charter*—A written document given by a sovereign or legislature, granting privileges.

<sup>14</sup> *Barnes*—Son of Sir Brian Newcome. Thackeray represents him as a mean little snob.

<sup>15</sup> *Dooched*—deuced. (Slang) A fashionable oath in those days.

<sup>16</sup> *Sarah Mason*—the old nurse of Colonel Newcome. She was also his aunt, being the first cousin of his mother.

<sup>17</sup> *Rode the high horse*—put on airs.

<sup>18</sup> *Poll*—Head.

<sup>19</sup> *Seems to have brought back a quantity of cayenne pepper from India*—Barnes wants to hint that Colonel Newcome gets into a temper very soon.

<sup>20</sup> *Perish on a funeral pile*—Refers to the custom of Suttee by which a Hindu widow burned herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband. This cruel custom was abolished by Lord William Bentinck.

## THE DAIRY

Hetty Sorrel, a beautiful but vain young girl, is the niece of farmer Martin Poyser. She is loved by Adam Bede, a strong and high minded carpenter, but without requiting his love she dreams of marrying the young squire of the village, Arthur Donnithorne and becoming a woman of position. She is seduced by Arthur and later discarded by him. She then makes up her mind to marry Adam Bede but discovers that she had already begun to expect Arthur Donnithorne's child. Her experiences after this discovery form a very pathetic story. She is later arrested and condemned to transportation for life, for the murder of her child. In the present chapter she meets Arthur

Donnithorne for the first time in the dairy of Martin Poyser.

<sup>1</sup> *Sicken for*—to long for, yearn.

<sup>2</sup> *Calenture*—A high fever in tropical regions, in which sailors fancy the sea to be a green field and desire to leap into it. *fig.*—burning passion.

<sup>3</sup> *Pattens*—A kind of overshoes worn to protect the ordinary shoes from mud or damp.

<sup>4</sup> *Short-horn*—A breed of cattle having short horns.

<sup>5</sup> *Mentor*—adviser, counsellor.

<sup>6</sup> *By the sly*—Secretly.

<sup>7</sup> *Stuff bodice*—a cotton bodice.

<sup>8</sup> *Fretted aisles*—Wings of church adorned with fret-work.

<sup>9</sup> *Circumvent*—to get the better of by craft or fraud; to overreach.

<sup>10</sup> *Promenade*—a paved public walk.

<sup>11</sup> *Steeplechase*—a race over obstacles.

<sup>12</sup> *The thirtieth of July*—the twenty-first birthday of Arthur Donnithorne.

<sup>13</sup> *Curtsey*—Feminine salutation made by bending knees and lowering body.

<sup>14</sup> *Millennial abundance of gates*—Provision of a large number of gates on the farms of the tenants. The present landlord, the elder Donnithorne, did not allow this facility.

<sup>15</sup> *Allowances of limes*—Free provision of lime manure.

<sup>16</sup> *Returns of ten per cent*—reduction in the dues paid by the tenants to the squire by ten per cent.

<sup>17</sup> *Nancy*—A dairy maid in the house of Mr. Poyser.

" *Alick*—A servant of Mr. Poyser.

" *Tete-a-tete*—private talk (French).

" *Pinafore*—Child's washable covering worn over frock to protect it from dirt.

" *In a state of collapse*—torn.

" *Gell*—girl (dialect).

### A CRISIS

' *The Chase Farm*—A farm in the Chase or extensive grounds attached to the house of the Donnithornes. The buildings of this farm were being repaired under the supervision of Adam Bede.

' *Mr. Craig*—A gardener, a friend of the Poyzers.

' *The young squire*—Arthur Donnithorne.

' *The Grove*—A group of fir trees near the house of the Donnithornes.

' *Gyp*—Name of Adam's dog.

' *Rencontre*—Encounter.

' *The locket*—Arthur Donnithorne had bought Hetty a locket which she wore on the occasion of a dance given in honour of Arthur's twenty-first birthday. Adam had observed this locket as it accidentally fell on the ground.

' *Give loose to*—Yield to.

' *To be come near by the hatchet*—To be cut down.

" *The Hermitage*—A cottage in the Fir-tree Grove, which was Arthur Donnithorne's retreat.

" *Depreciation*—Lowering of value, disparagement.

" *Light-minded*—Frivolous.

" *I'd rather have lost my right hand*—I would have preferred losing my hand to using this insulting language against you.



"*The good Poyzers*—Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, uncle and aunt of Hetty.

"*You was*—You were.

"*Element*—Part and parcel.

## ROBINSON GOES TO PRISON

"It is Never Too Late to Mend" from which the following scenes are taken, is a long novel with an intricate plot. The passages we have chosen all relate to Robinson, a clever thief, and the treatment he received in prison. Charles Reade describes the ghastly system of cruelty and repression which prevailed there and the effect of it on a sensitive prisoner like Robinson who in spite of the life of crime he had lived had a grain of goodness in his nature. This better part of him was being gradually submerged under the inhuman system adopted by Governor Hawes. The atmosphere, however, alters when there appears on the scene a new chaplain, the Rev. Francis Eden, who not only insists on preaching Christianity to the prisoners but also in practising it in his dealings with them. He shares their punishments with them and wins their love and devotion. Later portions of the book describe how through Mr. Eden's efforts an enquiry is made into the working of the prison system and Governor Hawes is dismissed, and the prison placed in charge of Mr. Eden himself. He introduces a regime of kindness in place of cruelty and of productive labour instead of the abominable "crank". Robinson, who becomes a warm admirer of Mr. Eden goes to Australia after the expiry of his sentence, where, after a great struggle and one or two lapses, he gradually becomes a reformed character.

<sup>1</sup>*Non-separate system*—Where prisoners are allowed to mix together.

<sup>2</sup>*Separate system*—Solitary confinement.

<sup>1</sup> *Silent system*—Where prisoners are forbidden to speak.

<sup>2</sup> *Chimerical*—foolish, impractical.

<sup>3</sup> *Acquiescence*—Consent, obedience.

<sup>4</sup> *Solidisant*—So called, false (French).

<sup>5</sup> *The friendly pressure*—Greeting or handshake from fellow prisoners.

<sup>6</sup> *Under turn key*—Assistant warder.

<sup>7</sup> *Yard*—Common prison.

<sup>8</sup> *No. 19*—Prisoners are called by their cell number.

<sup>9</sup> *Save the queen's pocket*—Save expense to the Government. Queen Victoria was reigning at that time.

<sup>10</sup> *Your reverence*—mode of addressing a priest. Robinson is making a mocking speech to the imaginary Chaplain.

<sup>11</sup> *Water-gruel*—Thin stew which is the usual prison diet.

<sup>12</sup> *Liturgy*—a form of prayer.

<sup>13</sup> *Vizor down*—head piece of armour; here peak of cap.

<sup>14</sup> *Egyptians*—Story from the Bible according to which God sent down such a darkness on the Egyptians that they could not see the Jews against whom they were fighting.

## GOVERNOR HAWES'S SYSTEM

<sup>1</sup> *Fry*—One of the warders who was a zealous supporter of Governor Hawes.

<sup>2</sup> *Crank*—A machine at which the prisoner turns a handle against a certain resistance which can be regu-

lated by the prison authorities. A diabolical form of unproductive labour.

<sup>5</sup> *Grottos*—Small dark chambers or cells.

<sup>6</sup> *Old Kentucky*—One of the early slave settlements in North America, where slaves were driven to hard labour with the lash of a whip.

<sup>7</sup> *Little drake*—Small duckling, here means, young reader.

<sup>8</sup> *Tread wheel*—Another labour device common in prisons, which is worked by foot pressure.

<sup>9</sup> *Hodges*—Another warder.

<sup>10</sup> *Staples*—Fixed U-shaped hooks.

<sup>11</sup> *Strait waistcoat*—A tight fitting leather waistcoat employed for torturing prisoners.

<sup>12</sup> *Hermitage*—Solitary residence, here means his crank chamber.

<sup>13</sup> *Mastiff*—Big watch-dog.

<sup>14</sup> *Hulks*—Big boats propelled by condemned prisoners.

<sup>15</sup> *No gammon*—No false excuses.

<sup>16</sup> *Eight thousand words*—Fry is trying a grim joke. He means eight thousand turns of the crank handle.

<sup>17</sup> *Infirmmary*—Prison hospital.

<sup>18</sup> *Slip his wind*—Lose his breath, get exhausted.

<sup>19</sup> *Amiable*—Pleasant. Said ironically for Hawes was anything but pleasant.

<sup>20</sup> *Light-headed*—Not in his senses.

<sup>21</sup> *Volatile particles of Frenzy*—Disconnected talk of a madman—'volatile' means very changeable.

<sup>22</sup> *Myrmidons*—Flattering slaves.

THE DONKEY, THE PACK & THE  
PACK-SADDLE

Stevenson was very fond of travel. His journeys, embracing almost an entire hemisphere, were undertaken apparently in the interest of his health but were in reality inspired by his insatiable wander-lust. His records of his journeys are so illumined by his imaginative genius and poetic fancy as to make them delightful specimens of English prose. The best example of this is to be found in his "Travels with a Donkey", which describes a walking tour in the Cevennes, through the valley of the Loire, in Southern France. It is a fascinating account of places free from the inroads of modern civilization. The present extract describes how the donkey was bought and other preparations for the journey completed.

' *Legitimists—Republicans.* The legitimists supported the Bourbons who reigned in France from 1815 to 1830, the Orleanists were in favour of the house of Orleans (1830-1848); the Imperialists were for Napoleon III (1851-1870); while the Republicans founded a Republic in France in 1870.

' *A mere mountain Poland*—Poland was well-known for its internal dissensions and brawls.

' *Babylon*—A city given to luxury and vice; Babylon was the capital of the ancient Chaldee empire.

' *Cevennes*—Mountains towards the south-east of France.

' *Indian Summer*—A late summer welcome for its warmth and beauty.

' *Valise*—Soldier's Knapsack.

' *At a pinch*—At the time of difficulty.

<sup>9</sup> *Galley-slave*—A slave condemned to work in a galley, a low flat built vessel propelled by sails and oars. The practice in the old days was to chain the slaves or criminals working on these vessels.

<sup>9</sup> *Quakerish elegance*—Simple grace. The Quakers, an English religious sect, are well-known for their plainness of dress and simplicity of speech.

<sup>10</sup> *Appurtenance*—Appendage.

<sup>11</sup> *Castors*—Small wheels on legs of chair, bed or table. Here the reference is to the hoofs of the donkey.

<sup>12</sup> *Spencer*—Short over-jacket.

<sup>13</sup> *Made me a double castle*—Gave me double protection.

<sup>14</sup> *Beaujolais*—A red wine made in Beaujeu in the valley of the Rhone.

<sup>15</sup> *Vaticinations*—Prophecies, forecasts.

<sup>16</sup> *Christian*—The hero of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress". Christian carried a pack on his back, which was the burden of his sins.

<sup>17</sup> *Contumelious a passage*—Exchange of hot and strong words. Use of insulting or contemptuous language.

## A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

<sup>1</sup> *Drove-road*—A road along which cattle are driven.

<sup>2</sup> *"In a more sacred" etc.*—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV, 705. Nymphs and fauns are mythological semi-divine beings, supposed to inhabit forests, rivers, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Rain down an influence*—It was once supposed that an ethereal fluid flowed from the stars and acted upon the character and destiny of men, and affected



other things generally. Now any kind of divine, moral or other secret power.

<sup>4</sup> *Arcana*—Mysteries, secrets.

<sup>5</sup> *Montaigne*—An essayist of the sixteenth century, gifted with great intellectual powers but tolerant of an easy morality.

<sup>6</sup> *Bastille Civilization*—Civilization of the prison-house. The Bastille was a fort in Paris, used as a state prison. It was destroyed on the 14th July, 1789.

<sup>7</sup> *Internal cold aspersion*—Internal cold bath, here means cold drink.

<sup>8</sup> *Runnel*—Brook.

<sup>9</sup> *Pass-keys*—Master-keys.

<sup>10</sup> *With ample lungs*—in a loud voice.

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

In this essay Hilaire Belloc discusses, in the form of a parable, the fate of civilizations with the advent of knowledge and the decline of religion. First we have an age of faith in ancient customs, simplicity of habits, accompanied by peace and contentment. Then follows an age of knowledge and discovery which brings in its train wealth, prosperity, ease and social inequality. This is followed by a period of idle speculation and doubts, leading to disruption of the established social system. Finally a barbarous but virile people puts an end to the existing order and establishes a new one, based on the traditions of the ancient faith, thus starting the same old cycle again. Like all good parables the story is of interest in itself, but its meaning has to be discovered by each reader for himself.

<sup>1</sup> *The Nephalo Ceclumenazenoï or the Nepioi*—The name of an imaginary nation.

<sup>1</sup> *Articulately speaking race*—The human race which speaks intelligibly.

<sup>2</sup> *Artless*—Simple, without artifice or deceit.

<sup>3</sup> *Construe*—Translate.

<sup>4</sup> *Grigs*—Grasshoppers or crickets. We say "as merry (or lively) as a grig".

<sup>5</sup> *Art of usury*—Money lending.

<sup>6</sup> *Millennial fashion*—According to Christian belief Christ will rise again and will reign in person on the earth for one thousand years. This will be a period of peace and prosperity, without wars and bloodshed.

<sup>7</sup> *Cloud*—State of gloom and suspicion.

<sup>8</sup> *Megalocrates*—One who thinks too much of himself, a megalomaniac.

<sup>9</sup> *Requires the use of wide headgear*—Because of his "swollen" head.

<sup>10</sup> *Prised open*—Also spelt "Prized". Forced open with a lever.

<sup>11</sup> *Schools*—Schools of thought.

<sup>12</sup> *The moon was made of a peculiarly delicious edible substance*—An old English folk-lore says, "The moon is made of cheese". This shows how foolish were the speculations of these so-called men of knowledge.

<sup>13</sup> *Lamentable deliquescence*—Sad decay, disuse. Deliquescence is a process of melting away.

<sup>14</sup> *Doddering*—Shaky with age.

<sup>15</sup> *Half-daft*—Half-mad, wild, crazy.

<sup>16</sup> *In the very centre of the crater of an active volcano*—So that none may come near it and prise open its hidden secrets, and restart an age of doubt.

## MR. MICAWBER

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-climax*—Opposite of climax. A statement that suddenly weakens the effect of a previous one. A fall contrasted with a previous rise.

<sup>2</sup> *Histrionic*—Theatrical.

<sup>3</sup> *College Hornpipe*—A jolly dance tune.

<sup>4</sup> *Seeing the Medway*—Mr. and Mrs. Micawber had come to see the Medway with a view to exploring the possibilities of starting a coal trade on its bank.

<sup>5</sup> *Auld Lang....frere*—Popular songs. The song "Auld Lang Sine" was made popular by Robert Burns, though the original version is attributed to Sir Robert Aytoun.

<sup>6</sup> *I.O.U.*—I owe you. A document bearing these letters, followed by a statement of the sum borrowed by a person, constituting a formal acknowledgment of a debt. A pro-note.

<sup>7</sup> *Neither corn nor coals*—The trades in which Mr. Micawber interested himself.

<sup>8</sup> *Traddles*—A friend of David Copperfield, who later became a barrister and helped David in bringing Uriah Heep, a wicked and cunning clerk, to justice.

<sup>9</sup> *Hard-bake*—Almond toffee.

<sup>10</sup> *Bow-street officer*—A police officer. In Bow Street the principal police-court of London is situated.

<sup>11</sup> *Front Bench manner*—Polite but pompous manners. In the British House of Parliament the front bench is reserved for ministers and ex-ministers.

<sup>12</sup> *His removal to Uriah Heep's*—Where he worked as a clerk of Uriah Heep.

<sup>13</sup> *Who has just seen Troy burn and is now about to embark on an Odyssey*—After the fall of Troy Odysseus sailed on the high seas and met strange adventures

(Greek Mythology). Who after a tragic happening is again ready to undertake a new adventure.

<sup>11</sup> *Valedictory*—Farewell.

<sup>12</sup> *His disguise*—In order to escape from his creditors Micawber changed his name to Mortimer and began to use spectacles.

<sup>13</sup> *Albion*—An ancient poetic name for Great Britain.

## LIFE OF MA PARKER

<sup>1</sup> *Beg parding Sir?*—Beg pardon, Sir? Ma Parker is an uneducated charwoman, and generally mispronounces many English words. Her language is Cockney, or London Slang.

<sup>2</sup> *Toque*—A cap or bonnet.

<sup>3</sup> *Gran! Gran!*—Short for Grand-ma. These affectionate words, uttered by Ma Parker's grandson when he was alive, bring to her mind painful memories and naturally add to her grief.

<sup>4</sup> *'Did' for himself*—Looked after the affairs of the house himself.

<sup>5</sup> *Kitching maid*—Kitchen maid.

<sup>6</sup> *Stratford-on-Avon*—The birthplace of Shakespeare.

<sup>7</sup> *Shakespeare Sir?*—People naturally expected her to know something about Shakespeare, but her answer shows that she was too much involved in her own grim struggle against poverty to know anything about the great poet.

<sup>8</sup> *Chimley*—Chimney.

<sup>9</sup> *Range*—Cooking fireplace.

<sup>10</sup> *Keep herself to herself*—Keep away from society.

"*What have I done?*—It is not only Ma Parker but the writer of the story as well who seems to ask this question. Why should there be so much unmerited suffering in this world?

"*There was nowhere!*—Not only did Ma Parker suffer terribly but she had no place in the world where she could freely give vent to her grief. This sentence heightens the gloom of the poor old woman's miserable existence and gives a tragic ending to the whole story.

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